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The Presbyterian Record

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PRESBYTERIAN Record

January 2001



What 11- to 14-year-olds want from their church p.14

Budget creep kills small churches



While larger churches appear to have been most at risk for membership loss, we know the smallest congregations were most at risk for closing. The risk for these congregations, however, has not come through membership decline as much as at the hands of inflation combined with stagnant memberships and financial uncertainty. Budget creep tends to kill the smallest churches. In our smallest churches, it can also be the loss of one family of good givers or the need to replace the building's furnace that can make all the difference in the world between holding on and having real difficulty. As a result, since 1978, 92 congregations (representing 25 per cent of our smallest churches) ceased to exist, through either closure or amalgamation.

— from the interim report of the Study Group to Research Denominational Membership Decline

I believe in the sun even when it is not shining. I believe in love even when feeling it not. I believe in God even when he is silent.

— inscription on a cellar wall in Germany where Jews hid from Nazis

Pilgrims or planners

I heard it suggested that we are either "pilgrims" or "planners." Planners spend their time trying to match up and fit into the life-style and priorities set by others, and measure the value of their social achievement in terms of material success. Pilgrims, on the other hand, cope with the unpredictability of life, accept human vulnerability and see life's ups and downs in terms of opportunities for human growth.

— Norman Shanks, leader of the Iona Community

The Lord's number

Having Lord as a last name has been interesting. A few years ago, my husband and I attended a time and talent auction at Trinity Church in Amherstview, Ontario. I was the successful bidder on one of the auctioned items. The woman who was recording the bid numbers and dollar amounts didn't catch my number and asked the auctioneer to get it for her. The auctioneer, who had known me for years, shouted out, "What's the Lords' number?" There was complete silence in the church hall. The auctioneer, realizing what he had said, came back quickly with, "Being here in the church, we should all know *his* number!" Then, he continued on with the sale.

— Donna Lord, Port Stanley, Ontario



One in four Canadian people in the work-force also cares for an elderly, disabled or ill family member.

Sewage worker Michael Last of Hilo, Hawaii, has filed a grievance against county officials for paying him overtime when he worked the past four Christmas holidays. As an atheist, Mr. Last feels offended that he is forced by his union to accept extra pay for working on a religious holiday.

— from "Signs that the Apocalypse is nearly upon us" by Gerry Bowler in *Christian Week*

The Bible has typos too

In praise of the *Record*'s copy editor, Margaret Miller, I have sometimes jokingly remarked, "Margaret would copy edit the Bible and find errors!" Well, the other day she did. In an early edition of the *NRSV*, Daniel 3:1 reads: "King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden statute ... " It should have read "statue." Later editions corrected this error. Now you know why the *Record* is so accurate.

A bit of hyperbole

If once a man indulges himself in murder, very soon he comes to think little of robbing; and from robbing he comes next to drinking and Sabbath-breaking, and from that to incivility and procrastination."

— Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859), English author

Dreaming from exile

Today there is a lot of talk about the Jubilee, but we all know it is not just around the next corner. It is far from being a reality and, to make matters worse, it would seem to be moving further and further away. What is swarming around us is, rather, evidence of an anti-Jubilee: debts, exclusions, imprisonment, people without land or home, and people dying premature deaths. Despite all this, however, we affirm the Jubilee because that is our task as Christians who believe in the resurrection, who believe in abundant life as a gift from God, and who have hope even in times of Messianic drought.

— Elsa Tamez


John Congram

Presbyterian strengths

Building blocks for a new millennium

As we slip into the next millennium (for some, it happened a year ago), we sometimes hear the question, Will the Presbyterian Church be around for another millennium? Most of us have difficulty thinking in terms of millenniums, so we are more apt to ask, Will the Presbyterian Church still be here 50 years from now? Or, if we want to be a little safer, we ask, in 25 years? Or, on our really pessimistic days, next week?

Someone will remind us this is not a Presbyterian question. Whether or not a particular denomination survives is not important; doing God's will is. So, having talked myself out of asking my original question, let me pose another. What strengths does The Presbyterian Church in Canada bring to its life and work in this new millennium?

The first, and most important, is many vital congregations. We can no longer talk about the strengths and weaknesses of denominations because congregations vary so greatly. Reginald Stackhouse, the retired principal of Wycliffe College, Toronto, points this out in his book *Alive Again*. We need to learn from congregations that are effective and thriving.

Gradually, denominational governing bodies are realizing they exist to support the primary units of our life: congregations. When that fully sinks in, that will be another strength.

As a Presbyterian, I was tempted to name theology first. I believe many are looking for what we possess — a rational, thoughtful but open and accepting approach to issues and faith. Our problem in the past has not been our theology but the package in which we present it — often obscure, unrelated to life and painfully dull. It need not be so. Theology can be both our strength and our presenting sin. Sometimes, we are so obsessed with being orthodox we forget we can be orthodox *and* unfaithful.

Our people, though small in numbers, provide great strength. We must find more effective ways to unleash their gifts. When I return from visiting congregations, I always feel energized by the people I meet and their potential for ministry. Our rich financial resources cannot be overlooked but, as Robert Chesnut points out in *Transforming the Mainline*, "Wealth and size are not the essential ingredients. The essential ingredients are spiritual and attitudinal."

Changes

You will notice a number of changes in the magazine. Some columns have disappeared. Through the Century with the *Presbyterian Record* ended because we ran out of decades to profile. Also concluding is the *Celebrate!* page that highlighted events marking the Jubilee, new millennium and the 125th anniversary of our denomination. Some of these, especially efforts directed for the Jubilee, continue and will be included in the regular pages of the magazine.

We thank Karen Timbers for editing our children's page since January 1998. Erin Walton, youth minister at First Church in Edmonton, and Jennifer O'Farrell, an elder in St. Mark's, Don Mills, Ontario, replace Karen. They will share in the overall direction of the column but alternate in writing actual columns. Jennifer starts off this month.

Generation Y@2000 has a new name: Generation Now. We continue to invite young people to share their views and ministries in this column.

Guideposts, which carried brief items from our past, will become an occasional feature.

We thank several contributing editors who have completed their term. We add Mary Fontaine, a student at Vancouver School of Theology, who brings an aboriginal perspective to the magazine. Mary grew up on the Mistawasis Reserve in Saskatchewan where she served on the band council and as pastor of the Presbyterian church there. Kathy Cawsey, former youth columnist, returns to bring her always stimulating views on life and faith. She is currently studying in Ireland. Glenn Cooper, minister of St. Andrew's, Westville, Nova Scotia, will report on the Maritime region. Glenn has spent his whole adult life in communications and hosts a radio program.

So, as the song goes, "We have only just begun" in our continuing attempts to make the magazine readable, challenging and supportive of the ministries of the church.

John Congram


Rod Booth, ACT

You can make a difference. Consider the impact PWS&D's emergency relief program has had on Selim Mazrekaj in Kosovo. Selim is 15 years old. In the spring of 1999, the Serb military separated the men in his village from the women and children. Selim's father and elder brothers have not been heard of since. Last winter, Selim, his 104-year-old grandmother, mother and little sister lived in a makeshift shed among the ruins of their ancient home in the village of Drenoc. This winter, Selim and his family are in a brand-new home built by Action by Churches Together (ACT). Since June of 1999, ACT's six implementing agencies in Kosovo and more than 26 supporting churches and partners from around the world — including PWS&D — have spent more than $30 million dollars rebuilding Kosovo's homes, schools and community centres.

This is what is possible when churches work together. To young men like Selim Mazrekaj, this is making all the difference in the world.

Together we can make a difference!

PWS&D's emergency relief programs operate because people and congregations financially support the work. PWS&D receives no funds from *Presbyterians Sharing....* The Canadian International Development Agency matches most emergency funds 4:1.

For more information or to make a donation, write or call:

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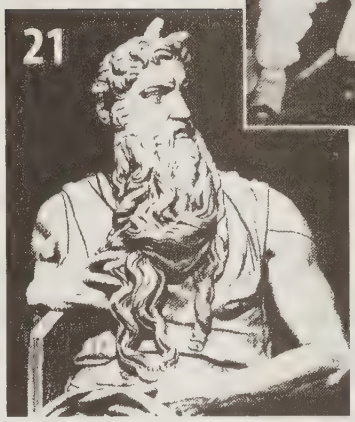
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Dave Overholt, minister of the Church of the Rock in Hamilton, Ontario, describes the spiritual hunger of the younger generation • One of these nominees will likely be the next Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada • An interview with Malcolm Gladwell, writer for the *New Yorker* magazine and author of *The Tipping Point*



Ethel Currie, housekeeper for Lucy Maud Montgomery from 1934 to 1937.

Another housekeeper

My mother-in-law, Ethel Currie, was a housekeeper for Lucy Maud Montgomery from 1934 to 1937. She is now 87 years old and moved to Norfolk Manor in Guelph, Ontario, last year. She is a member of Knox Church in Milton where she lived from 1964 until 1999. Ewen MacDonald, Lucy Maud's husband, conducted Ethel's wedding in the MacDonalds' Toronto home in 1937.

Perhaps one of the L. M. Montgomery "followers" will try to arrange for the two housekeepers to get together. Who knows?

Gail Currie,
Campbellville, Ont.

Editor's note: *In my article "Remembering Lucy Maud" (November* ***Record****), I incorrectly said Elsie Davidson was the sole-surviving housekeeper of Lucy Maud Montgomery. Ethel Currie served as a live-in housekeeper for the MacDonalds both in Norval, Ontario, and when they later moved to Toronto.*

Thrilled

I was thrilled to see the article on Maud Montgomery in the November issue of the *Record*. But, more important, it was great to see the positive review of *The Lucy Maud Montgomery Album*. This was truly a labour of love, and I give a lot of credit to Kevin McCabe for getting the project going. It took much longer than any of us who had any measure of involvement in the project expected, but the final work was well worth the wait.

I am a member of the Kirk of St. James in Charlottetown — a church in which Maud occasionally worshipped when she was a student at Prince of Wales. (Her church of choice in Charlottetown, though, was Zion!)

Carol Dobson,
Charlottetown

Shorter letters are more likely to be published and less likely to be edited

Confusion

It was a pleasure to read John Congram's feature article "Remembering Lucy Maud," based on an interview with Elsie Davidson. Having met Ms. Davidson a few years ago, I know she has a lot of respect for L. M. Montgomery.

There is one detail people in the L. M. Montgomery community might appreciate having clarified. The lead sentence is a quote from Elsie Davidson that "a lot written about Lucy Maud Montgomery is unadulterated trash." That is, of course, true; but I'm sure she was not referring to *The Lucy Maud Montgomery Album*, a copy of which she holds in the photograph accompanying the article and which is next to the comment in question.

The Lucy Maud Montgomery Album is a sort of encyclopaedia of information about the author. It contains a lot of biographical information as well as information on her career. Kevin McCabe and Alexandra Heilbron, well-known Montgomery scholars and authors, edited this impressive volume to which many other Montgomery authors and scholars contributed.

Carolyn Strom Collins,
St. Paul, Minnesota



What would Jesus do?

The question WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?) is always a hard one because Jesus was always doing and saying original and unpredictable things. Most of us operate with pat formulas and rules — but not Jesus. Maybe he would react as the Moderator suggests (November *Record*) but, equally likely, it seems to me, he might say (as he did to two brothers arguing over an estate), "Who made me judge over you?" Or, maybe, he would

throw out a challenge like, "Turn the whole damn set of traps over to your brother and come, follow me."

Who knows for sure? Not having direct access to Jesus' opinion on the subject, I would have been interested during the election campaign to know exactly what the Liberal, Alliance, Conservative, NDP and Bloc parties had to say on this matter. In fact, I thought that was their job. Give me some good arguments and I might be able to arrive at my own view — which I hope I would be able, in good conscience, to explain to my Lord for his comments and response.

Barry Mack,
St. Lambert, Que.

Separation of church and state

I respond to the editor's comment (October *Record*), "What happened to the sacredly held American belief in the separation of church and state?"

I do not know who coined the phrase, but its meaning is almost always misunderstood by both Canadians and Americans. Whatever may be its source, it is a poor paraphrase of the First Amendment to the constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." In other words, there will be no state church (as in, for example, Scotland, England, Germany) and, at the same time, there will be no impediments to the expression of a person's religious convictions. The latter, of course, is but a particular application of the more general freedom of speech. So, commendable or deplorable, the candidates' articulation of their faith convictions is the very thing guaranteed by the constitution!

It is also interesting to note for Americans and Canadians alike that the Second Amendment has been similarly misunderstood and, in fact, significantly broadened over the years by the courts: the "right to bear arms." Simply stated, the framers of the constitution did not grant a blanket right to citizens to have firearms, as many are wont to believe. The amendment has everything to do with maintaining a "well-regulated Militia" as "being necessary to the security of a free State" and nothing to do with keeping any type of weapon people desire for sport, amusement or personal protection against neighbours. The United States would likely be a somewhat different society if one could own and possess a firearm only as a member of a regular "well-regulated Militia" (or, to use a more contemporary term, a national guard unit).

Ron VanAuken,
Whitby, Ont.



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Immigration

to Canada had not been easy. Cultural adjustment, language, discrimination and ongoing poverty had all taken their toll on his family. Domestic violence had resulted in an absent father and an emotionally unstable mother. At 15, he found himself caring for his brothers and sisters. For four years, the Hall's youth program had provided him with stability in an unpredictable and chaotic life. We offered the positive role modelling that he so desperately needed. Our recreational activities gave him the opportunity to simply be a teenager. He has now started to talk about his hopes and dreams. We are overjoyed to have played a part in his life.

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Globalization and the churches

I want to apologize to Rev. Lloyd Smith (Letters, Nov. and Sept. *Record*) for assuming that, as a retired minister, he receives a pension from the church. That said, there are four points I wish to make.

Smith insists he is not against the American people. Who, then, does he think are the stakeholders in American companies? Who are the investors, the suppliers, the employees, the managers, the dependants, the pensioners and all who benefit from the aggregate of all companies based in the United States?

Only by expanding free trade and globalization do ordinary people in a Third World country have a chance for steady employment and an increasing standard of living. Hand-outs are not and never will be the answer. Each country, on its own merits, has to attract capital investment from beyond its own borders. Indeed, many who oppose globalization are those who, in a developed country, might lose their jobs to the Third World or might watch their related union dues decline.

In most underdeveloped countries, the only social support system is the family. This makes the need for steady family income more vital. Many of the funds given by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are never repaid but, instead, seem to be diverted to banks in safe havens or to equip the military to perpetuate a particular government or dictatorship.

A classic example of free trade was with the Union of Scotland and England in 1707. The Scots' principal motivation was to get free trade with the English domestic and overseas markets. Over the next 150 years, Scotland prospered unbelievably despite two failed Jacobite uprisings the majority did not support.

I suggest a new book by Hernando De Soto, a Peruvian economist, entitled *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*. It is based on his research on shantytowns in places such as Sao Paulo, Mexico City and Nairobi.

Colin Currie,
Scarborough, Ont.

Party politics

In response to John Congram's declaration (November *Record*) as to why he never joined a political party, may I gently remind him and many others of the same view that the surest way for evil to flourish is for good people to stand aside and do nothing.

From the time I came to Canada 70 years ago as a callow 17-year-old, I have found it to my survival to join the church and also to engage in political affairs. I have found as much politics in the conduct of church affairs from the congregational to the national level as I have found in all levels of political parties.

As for politics, to which so many seem to take a holier than thou stance — not lowering themselves but, maybe, voting for the best candidate or, more often, not at all — they're all liars. How often we meet with such cop-outs. Much better to curse the darkness than to light a candle.

One of my earliest school readers had an eight-line poem by Emerson. The opening line was, "Not gold but only men can make a nation great and strong." My heartfelt prayer is that Stockwell Day will be our next prime minister and may God be with us all.

Arthur E. Gregg,
Penticton, B.C.

In the November *Record*, the editor comments on the past and on the fact that he has never joined a political party. Further, he believes those who join a party can have a real effect on the course of their communities and country.

The good news is we can join a political party and have an effect on our community and country.

My view is that both the Liberal and Conservative old-line centrist parties remain in the past century. Now is the time to enter the 21st century. The Canadian Alliance came into being to represent the best ideas of our democracy.

Your father insisted you must vote for the best person. Voters must decide, am I voting for my father (the past) or for my children (the future)?

David Foulkes,
Nepean, Ont.


Glen Davis

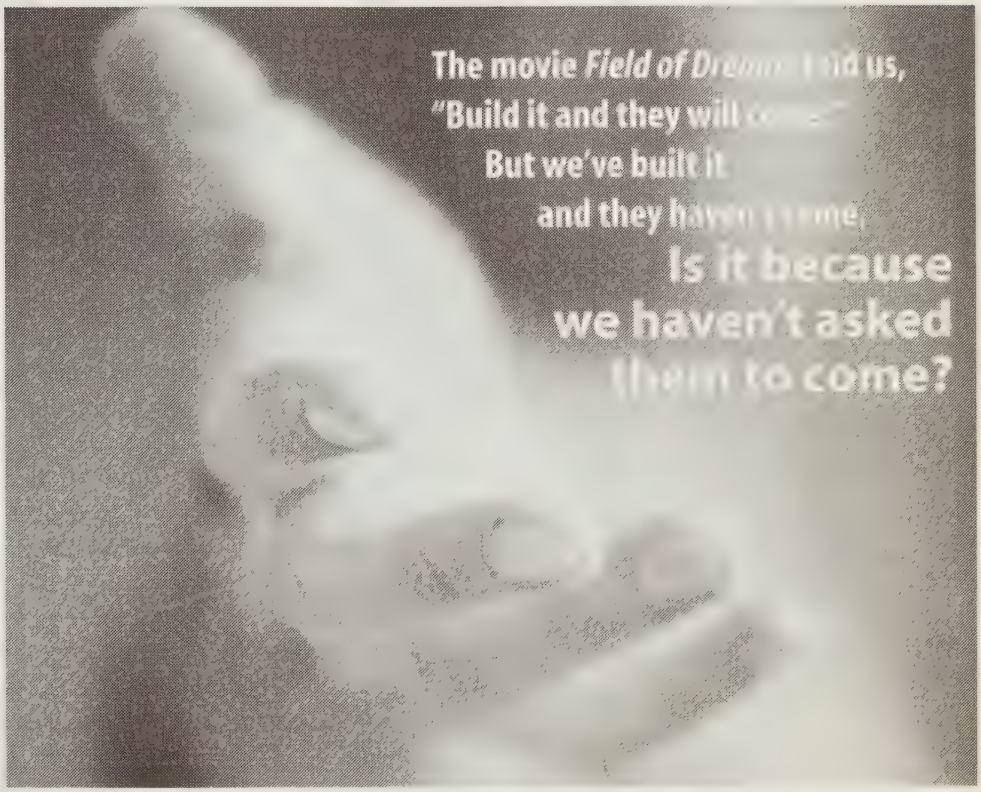
How do we stop the bleeding?

The research on why churches grow has been done. It is a simple, inexpensive method. Why don't we try it?

Last week, I had an unexpected visitor. An elderly, retired minister had spent more than two hours on train and subway to reach our church. He wanted to show me something he had written.

It was an article about the decline in strength and numbers in our church across Canada and how little we're doing about it. He wrote out of deep pain and disappointment and also out of heartfelt love for Christ and for the church. We talked for more than an hour. I was moved by his passion for the work of Christ and his determination to do whatever he can to halt the pattern of decline in our churches.

In my travels over the past six months, I have found that this matter of decline or lack of growth is a major concern for Canadian Presbyterians. "How do we stop the bleeding? How do we turn things around?" they ask.



Not that every church is declining. Some are growing and stepping out in mission and ministry. They are positive and enthusiastic about their future. But many others are struggling. They are barely holding their own or are losing ground. Their constant question is, "What can we do?"

There is no shortage of answers. The experts list the secrets of church growth: upbeat contemporary music, good preaching that relates the gospel to people's lives, a large parking lot, an attractive nursery, a variety of activities and learning opportunities, an accessible building, friendly people to greet newcomers as well as a strategy for getting them involved and integrated into church life.

No doubt most of these are important factors in growth. But they all focus on what newcomers will find when they come. The unanswered question is, how do we get them to come? In places where the population is growing rapidly, a few "church shoppers" show up almost every Sunday. If the "product" is good, they will stay. But what about all those communities where there are no new people moving in? How do churches attract the unchurched of the community?

The answer is simpler than we think: invite them to come. Church growth researchers tell us over and over that between 70 and 85 per cent of newcomers first come to church because a friend invites them.

If a business did market research and found it could double its customers through one simple, inexpensive method, it would be crazy not to try that method.

Well, the research has been done. We know, without doubt, that inviting people gets results. So, perhaps, we should focus our energy on helping our church members engage naturally and freely in the practice of inviting people to events and opportunities at our church.

A member of our ministerial recently came back from England. In London, she visited Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, where the *Alpha* program originated. As

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she entered the foyer, a large sign drew her attention:

OUR MISSION IS TO MAKE
DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST
AND ...
TO MAKE FRIENDS

She discovered that making friends with potential Christians outside the church is a key activity for all members of Holy Trinity. The church provides a variety of high quality social events to which members feel comfortable inviting their friends. Then, when the time comes for the dinner where the next *Alpha* course is introduced, it is an easy, natural step to invite the same friends to that dinner.

We have recently completed our second *Alpha* course at Knox Church in Agincourt, Ontario. So far, all those who have taken the course have been active church members. They have found it to be a wonderful experience of growing in the faith, engaging in enjoyable discussion and making better friends. The next step is to invite a friend, a relative or a neighbour to come to an *Alpha* introductory dinner. We will do all we can to encourage them to take that step.

The movie *Field of Dreams* told us, "Build it and they will come." But we've built it and they haven't come. Is it because we haven't asked them to come? A simple invitation might not be the whole solution but, if enough of us do this, it will make a difference.

How about this for a New Year's resolution? "I will make a friend outside the church this year. Then, I will ask that friend to come to one event in our church in 2001."

May your new year be blessed with friends.



Moderator's itinerary

January 21
Parkwood Church, Ottawa

January 22-23
Leaders of Churches meeting, Toronto

February 4
100th anniversary
St. Paul's Church, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

Gillan Jackson

Breakfast at the table of grace

Showing the face of Christ in downtown Vancouver

Last October, Central Church celebrated the first anniversary of its community breakfast program. While reflecting on its success, I marvel at the changes that have taken place over the past year. On the last Sunday of every month, we now serve more than 200 breakfasts. There are about 165 guests and at least 40 people from the congregation, including helpers. And most of those invited go back for second helpings!

People sit at table with each other, strangers at their first bite of pancakes and sausages and home fries but sharing and talking and experiencing each other while they eat. What started out as an attempt to show the face of Christ in our community has exploded into a full-blown expression of Christ in the world.

We began the breakfast program as an outreach to the many who are homeless, elderly and living alone in SRO (single room occupancy) hotels in the downtown/West End of Vancouver. The idea percolated to the top at our second annual congregational visioning workshop led by Rev. Rick Horst. The congregation tried to identify two ways to reach out to the community. It was clearly stated this was not to focus on church growth but primarily to show the face of Christ to our community.

Our first breakfast drew 40 guests and was, in short, total pandemonium. But people did get fed! Many asked about the catch. They were used to free meals coming with a sermon or something! By the second breakfast, we were more organized and had our cooks, servers and church street-walkers. The street-walkers go up and down the alleys and streets of the West End and downtown areas passing out invitations to come for breakfast.



Serving breakfast guests: (L to R) Gloria Cheng, Fran Gillespie, Maggie Chang, Phamie Dallas.

Our numbers grew and so did our volunteer base. From the beginning, members of Central Church and Christ Alive (which shares the building with us) were the core. Vancouver Taiwanese Presbyterian congregation supported us financially with a gift of $2,000. A request for funding was accepted by PIM (Presbyterian Innovative Ministries), a special fund administered by the Synod of British Columbia. With this funding, we purchased the necessary equipment and supplies. Doll and Penny's Café on Davie Street donated sausages.

Through the winter and spring, the number of guests grew and so did the volunteers. Our ministry student, Joshua Hseih, arranged for Taiwanese youth group members to volunteer once. (While Joshua has now been ordained and is serving in San Jose, California, the youth group still volunteers at every breakfast.) Some have come and stayed because they never knew a church that did this; and they remain for worship, too. A neighbour of one of our members who owns a European bakery delivers day-old bread for distribution to our guests.

It has been an amazing experience. Once a month, on the Sunday before the social assistance and old age security cheques go out, this diverse band of Christians gets together to serve people in need with a spirit of love and grace that can only be found in the Spirit of God in Christ.

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So what has been the benefit to the community? Is there evidence Central Church has grown because of this program? How do we measure the success of a program such as this? Certainly not in dollars or numbers! Each breakfast costs approximately $600. In the fall, we began a fund-raising drive to replenish the depleted coffers.

The benefit to the community is easy to identify. Most of our guests are people on the financial or social fringes of our society. They include seniors, day labourers, low income families, singles, HIV/AIDS sufferers, addicts, native people, immigrants — people who are often ignored by the institutions of government and, unfortunately, by the church. What they find at our table is a spirit of community because they are treated as individuals instead of as numbers or potential converts. This does not mean we hide our faith or discourage people from attending our services; rather, our primary focus is on making our guests feel at home. Members of the congregation purposely sit at tables with strangers and engage them, often with positive results.



Jim McNeill (left) with Gillan Jackson (author).

A lot of our guests come every month and also greet us warmly on the street. For one breakfast, I was one of the streetwalkers. I walked down Granville and through the alleys of the downtown core, gently waking those sleeping under cardboard boxes and inviting them for breakfast. Inviting is the key word — we ask them to break bread with us, not come for a free meal served by others. On the trip down Granville, I met a young man walking up the street and asked him if he was hungry and would like to join us for breakfast.

"Where?" he asked.

"The church at the corner of Thurlow and Pendrell," I replied.

"Oh, I know it. That's today?" he asked. I nodded. "I'm going right now," he said. Then, before leaving, he turned and said, "You know, that's the best damn church in the world!" I believe he meant that as a compliment.

Have we grown as a congregation? Yes, a few new people have joined us; but the real change is in the congregation itself. In a phone call from a friend who works with people in the downtown eastside, he commented that he needed to thank the church. He is a member of another church, so I was surprised and asked why.

He said: "Your breakfast program is so appreciated by people. They've never experienced anything like it!"

I replied that the greatest change was in us. The way we see people on the street — the total change from a wariness to strangers who are different to an unrestrained outpouring of grace is readily in evidence. We now know many of our guests who are like family members. Yet, every month, new guests accept our invitation. This church that was near death is now alive and filled with the grace and truth of the Spirit.

We count the success of this program by its ability to allow the Spirit of God to revitalize a congregation that was fearful of its future. Our breakfast program gives us the opportunity to show the unending love and grace and forgiveness of God to our guests and, by doing so, we find ourselves staring into the face of Christ. R

Gillan Jackson is a representative elder at Central Church, Vancouver.

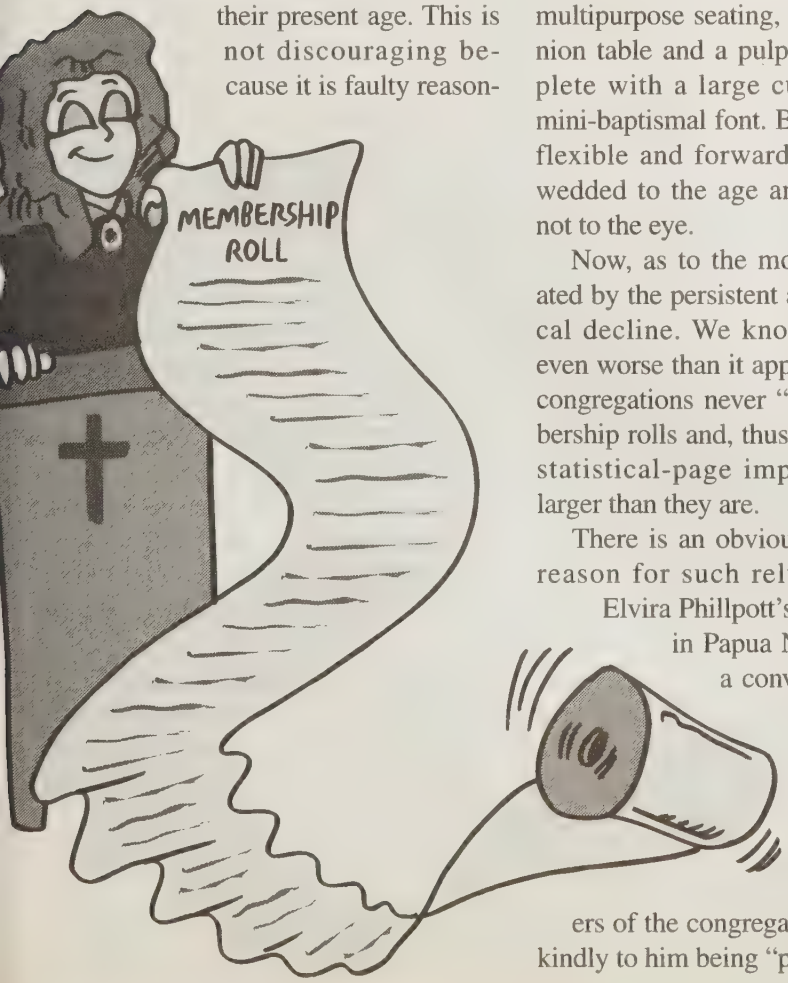
pastoral epistles from peter plymley II

My dear editor:

Except for those who believe there was a year AD 0, this month is the first in the new millennium. I don't suppose many of your readers consider this assertion to be more than the nit-picking of a crank, but Presbyterians used to care about such things as accuracy, no matter what the tide of popular sentiment flowing against them.

Of course, the true dawning of the millennium means we have yet to survive our first year within it. That's depressing. But considering the fact that the King Herod of Matthew's Gospel died in 4 BC, thus putting the birth of Jesus back to, say, 6 BC, we may have already survived half a decade in the new era! That's encouraging.

As a corollary to the above, it also means The Presbyterian Church in Canada, which the number-crunchers tell us has the most aged membership among all denominations, is made up of people five years or more older than their present age. This is not discouraging because it is faulty reasoning, and faulty reasoning has never discouraged us lately.



The statistical people have also informed us that smaller congregations — of approximately 60 members — have not suffered much decline but have remained stable. Encouraging. Most of the decline has been at the expense of "larger" (by Canadian standards, anyway) congregations of 250 or more. That may appear to be discouraging, except for the hope that, when they eventually slide to the magic number of 60, they will stabilize.

Their only problem will be the maintenance of buildings that once held 250 or more. But put a day-care centre where pews used to be. Then, in some old meeting room/parlour/memorial hall, install multipurpose seating, a folding Communion table and a pulpit on wheels complete with a large cup-holder for the mini-baptismal font. Behold! a fearlessly flexible and forward-looking solution wedded to the age and encouraging, if not to the eye.

Now, as to the morale problem created by the persistent and evermore critical decline. We know the problem is even worse than it appears because some congregations never "purge" their membership rolls and, thus, create the on-the-statistical-page impression of being larger than they are.

There is an obvious and well-known reason for such reluctance. Though Elvira Phillpott's nephew now lives in Papua New Guinea and is a convert and shaman to the Cargo Cult, he once attended Sunday school here. And the Phillpotts, who are BIG supporters of the congregation, wouldn't take kindly to him being "purged." So …

But has anyone considered the negative association of the word "purged"? So fundamentally harsh! Why not listen to the world we are trying to reach and borrow from it the kinder, gentler terms "downsize" or "outplace"?

Indeed, why be negative at all? Why bother with the silly little distinction between "adherent" and "member"? After all, if someone adheres to a pew often enough (say, four times a year) *and* puts money into the plate, is that not a "profession of faith," sort of? Count them in, I say!

> *Why bother with the silly little distinction between "adherent" and "member"? Count them in, I say! And why stop there?*

And why stop there? If we really, truly believe in the church "visible *and invisible*," as we profess we do in the celebration of the Holy Communion and in the memories of all wistful souls who hark back to when "you couldn't get a seat here if you came late," how dare we exclude them from membership statistics? Count the tombstones! Examine the burial records! And worry not about assessments that factor in membership. Just tell synod, or whomever, that "some of our members don't live within the bounds of the parish but we have forwarded your request." Think of the spike in membership figures, the joy, the encouragement!

One more thing. If growth is contingent on reflecting and speaking to the times, think of how well our theological colleges reflect the Canadian mood, evident by the results of the last election! We have one now known as embodying an Evangelical Alliance on the Reformed Right, a Progressively Conservative Liberal Centrist institution, and a Whatever school picking up the rest. How can we lose?

Yours encouragingly,

Peter Plymley II

A place in the middle

What 11- to 14-year-olds want from their church

by Susan Atkinson and Hannah Atkinson



Hannah: I never talk to my friends about Jesus or God or religion because this never really comes up. We talk about stuff that happens at school, stuff we do at home or with our other friends, movies, music, but not religion. I'm not sure if my friends would be interested in coming to my church, or if they'd like it or have fun. I wouldn't be embarrassed to bring a friend to church; I just think they wouldn't be interested. Not many of my friends go to church regularly.

I know I belong to my church because I know the people there and the people know me. I don't know if other people know I belong. I usually stay during the service with my mom but, sometimes, I go to Sunday school. Every other weekend, I go to my dad's, so I don't go to youth group very often. For kids my age (12), our church has Sunday school and youth group once we're 13 or in Grade 7. I wish the church would have more things like days when there are games and stuff for the kids to do, like picnics or dinners, times when we could bring our friends.

Kids between 11 and 14 don't participate in worship services very often because people don't ask us. I would take up the offering or maybe sing in the choir if someone asked me. I'm shy so I don't really want to participate in the service by reading the Scripture or anything like that. I would take up the collection or something that doesn't draw much attention to me.

If I could change anything about Sunday school, I'd have more games and interactive things. I don't like that all the different age groups are separated because I think it would be good for the older kids to interact with the kindergarten kids. We could teach them stuff and tell them stories about God from the Bible as well as the teachers tell them. Then the kids would all get to know each other and have a good relationship. The teachers aren't mean like some teachers at school but, sometimes, they sort of treat us like babies by the way they talk to us and by the tone of voice they use. But that doesn't happen very often.

I would like to talk more about how to handle life situations like getting in trouble at school, or gossiping, or lying, or dating. I'd like to do that in a group discussion with everyone giving his or her point of view. It would be kind of neat to have the older teens leading the discussion because they're closer to our age than adults. Our youth leader thinks of lots of cool stuff to do and she's a really nice person who listens to us. If I had a friend in trouble or with spiritual questions, I guess I'd go to my mom or, maybe, to Rev. Jan or, possibly, to Lauren, our youth group leader — but only if it was really bad, something I was really worried about.



Susan: Hannah and I have struggled with the question of her involvement at church for the past 18 months or so. It's more like a joint enquiry into the purpose of her participation in group worship than it is any kind of disagreement. She wants to be there; I want her to be there. But she's at an interesting age: she's old enough to be thinking about some pretty big questions, as she has described, but she's still young enough to appreciate some help and to want a lot of fun while she's learning.

So Hannah and I decided to talk to some other people about her age in the Presbyterian Church to see if others were experiencing the same sorts of dilemmas. I freely admit this was also a way for me to open dialogue on faith issues with her, an area she sometimes shrinks from discussing directly, and to encourage her to examine her personal responsibility in these areas. Subtle, I'm not. We came up with a list of 10 questions based on our own conversations and asked them of everyone between 11 and 14 we could find by phone, e-mail or in person.

Young people were generally surprised and pleased to be asked for their input. Most of them are pretty happy with their home churches, and this seems to be a result of the positive relationships they have with other youth and the adults in their churches. But they've also got wish lists.

Too old for flannelgraph Jonah and the whale, and too young for mission trips to Guatemala, 11- to 14-year-olds need to find some place in the middle. What follows are the most frequently mentioned things young people 11 to 14 want from their churches.

#5 in the series focusing on ministry with children, teens and young adults

Individual acceptance and attention

This age group includes incredible variety in physical and intellectual development. A 13-year-old boy, for example, might be four feet 11 inches and weigh 75 pounds, or he might be six feet tall and weigh 140 pounds. A 12-year-old girl might be working eight hours a week at her part-time job and saving diligently toward her long-term goal of buying a horse, or she might be playing Barbies every weekend with her best friend. One of the neatest things about this age group is that, on Monday, they may be talking about the upcoming school dance and their career plans and, on Tuesday, all they care about is digging a new tunnel in the backyard for a brilliant frogman game that's just occurred to them. Same kid, different day.

Does the variety within this group make it tough to plan programming? Well, it does and it doesn't. What the young people we spoke with want are activities that allow for individual choice, one-on-one time with adults who listen to them with respect, and the opportunity to have their opinions taken seriously, whether they get voted down by the majority of their peers or not.

Even the most well-meaning among us get caught not paying attention from time to time. One parent I spoke with noted that, when she meets one of her son's friends on the street, she looks him in the eye and says hello. Because she knows the boy, she hardly notices his eyebrow ring or flak jacket. However, when she came upon a group of the boys together, she looked away and walked past without speaking. The kids hadn't changed, she had. She didn't see them as individual friends of the family when they were in a group; they became simply another cluster of potentially hostile young teens. (One time, she passed a group of boys on the street, only to hear her son's voice calling indignantly, "Mom!?!")

Individual acceptance means seeing young people as valuable, potential friends regardless of what they wear, or how they fix their hair, or how loudly they laugh, or how many skateboards they own. Remember, you're on the same side, not least of all because you're part of the same family of faith.

Individual acceptance means seeing young people as valuable, potential friends regardless of what they wear, or how they fix their hair, or how loudly they laugh, or how many skateboards they own

Participation in worship

There are few things less interesting to young people in this age group than sitting on hard pews and watching adults engage in unexplained routines or intone a distant deity in abstract language. Even shy young people would rather participate actively in worship by taking up the offering or passing out hymn-books.

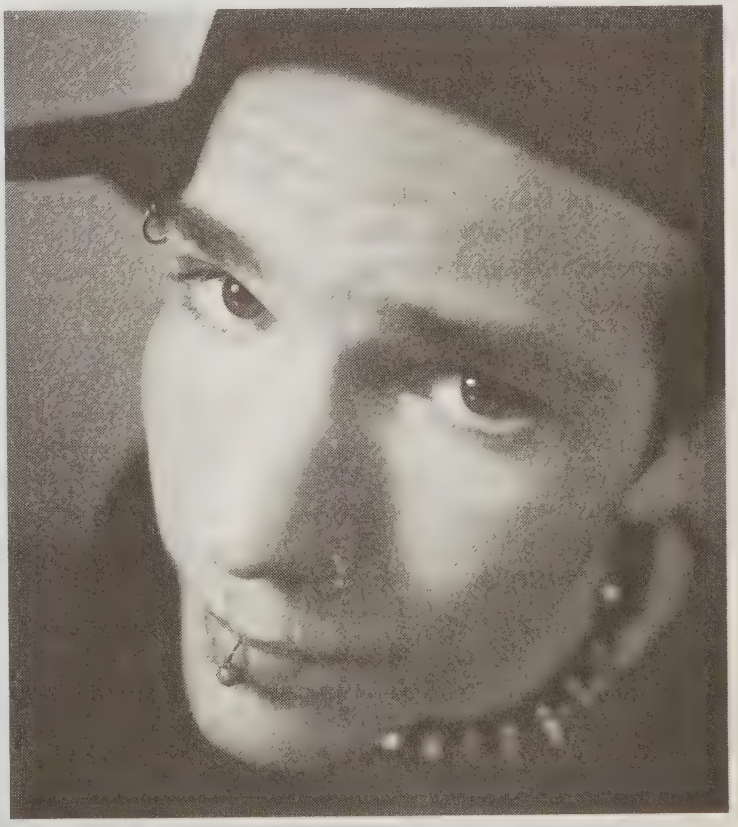
Some adults are leery of letting young people participate more fully because they fear disrupting the flow of worship. With preparation and teamwork, the benefits of whole-congregation worship far outweigh any faltering. Young people

The search for identity

John Pinck is the president of the Presbyterian Young People's Society of the Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario. He has begun a Web site that's worth keeping an eye on at www.crosswinds.net/~pyps/main.html. It includes photos, news, events listings and more. John provided these comments on his own experience between the ages of 11 and 14 at St. Andrew's Church in Ottawa.

On thinking back to when I was that age, I think one of the great things my Sunday school teacher did was break away from the church school curriculum and put a focus on current news and events. He would usually start the class by asking, "Did you see in the news today that ... ?" or something similar. Then he would help us form our own opinions and let us reflect on whether our reactions to the world were what Scripture says they should be.... We would pray for God's help in guiding our thoughts and feelings. The teacher helped us grow by getting us to watch the news and keep up with current events while, at the same time, guiding us through the Christian way.

One of the only things I feel could have been better in my church was if the general church population had not passed judgment on young teenagers because of their appearance. At this point in their lives, they are searching for identity. We can all think back to that age and see the different fads we went through. As embarrassing as they sometimes may be, they were all a part of our search for identity. During that search, church members should be especially interested and eager to make church part of who that young individual is. The church must nurture the individual through this period of searching, and not simply dismiss it as a life-style choice.



Jonah and the whale

It's time to tell you a tale
Of Jonah and a great whale.
It started a long time ago
In a place of sin and woe.
Ninevah was a bad city
And the Lord was not taking pity,
So Jonah was to go one day
And order them to change their way.
In fear Jonah decided to flee
And sailed out upon the sea.
He slept in the hold of a ship
Planning on a very long trip.
A storm of great magnitude came
And the sailors found Jonah to blame.
They prayed to their god but the storm got worse.
They rowed very hard but were under a curse.
They prayed to the Lord and cast Jonah in the sea.
The storm then stopped and they were set free.
God sent a whale to save Jonah's life —
It swallowed him up without pain or strife.
Jonah then prayed to the Lord
That he would deliver his word.
For three long days and weary nights,
Jonah saw just darkness, no lights.
Then the whale spit Jonah out on land.
He then entrusted his life to God's hand.

— written for a Grade 10 school project by Tara Kergan of St. Mark's Church in Moose Jaw, Sask.



After a study of the book of Jonah, children in the church school of St. Mark's, Moose Jaw, Sask., created a mural called *Jonah and the Whale*. Seated front (L to R): Mart-Marie Van Heerden, Jacques Van Heerden, Marlene de Bruin, Carman Fielding, Chelsea Fielding, Elizabeth Song, Rachel Steinhoff. Standing: Debbie Song, Waldi de Bruin, Beno Van Heerden, Ben Song. Missing: Tara, Callie and Lindy Kergan.



When she turned nine years old, Jaime Apps of Kelowna, B.C., asked friends coming to her birthday party to bring food to be donated to charity rather than birthday presents. At St. David's Church in Kelowna, Jaime had heard about the Servants Anonymous Society that provides a safe house for prostitutes trying to give up the street life. How did she feel about not getting any presents? "I have enough things already," Jaime said. "It felt fine."

can be part of the joy and awe of worshipping the Lord; they can learn to love worshipping God for life.

A few pointers from young people. If you want to include them as lay readers, encourage the occasional use of a contemporary translation of the Bible, allow them at least a week to practise and offer pronunciation help with those Old Testament names and places. If you want to include them as greeters and ushers, let them do it in pairs if they prefer so they'll be less self-conscious. If you want to open the children's story to their leadership, work with them to come up with a meaningful, effective delivery of the chosen story, at least for the first time or, again, let them do it in teams.

Considering worship from a young teenager's point of view can be difficult, so don't be afraid to ask them directly what they'd like. One 11-year-old we interviewed said he wished worship included "better music" — and his mother is the hip, young, 38-year-old music director at the church! (She's laying pretty good odds he won't see his 12th birthday!) He knows what he doesn't want, but asking him specifically what he'd consider "better" music might point to contemporary composers, more accessible lyrics and use of piano and guitar rather than the organ. Remember, his ear has been trained differently than our generation's. What sounds like beautiful harmony and lush organ chords to us may sound like so much funeral music to him.

To get willing and frequent participation in worship from young people, think of yourself as a mentor working in partnership with the young people — a coach, rather than someone delegating an activity to get it off your own to-do list.

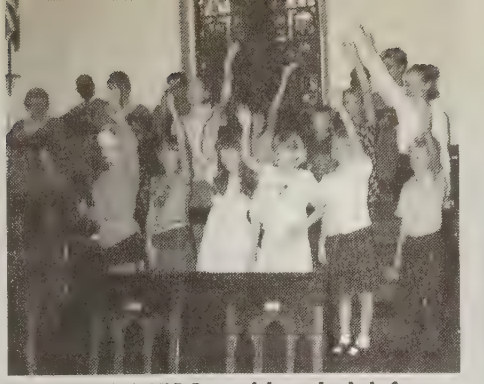
Relevance to their lives outside church

Today, 12-year-olds in Grade 7 are being asked to make career choices at school. Gap, Roots, fast-food companies and the music industry are marketing to 10- and 11-year-olds with a vengeance. The average age for a first cigarette, alcohol and drug use, not to mention first sexual activity, gets younger every decade. Educators consider grades 7 and 9 to be the toughest years at school because of the sheer weight of intellectual, social, physical and emotional change taking place in students. Demands at school and home tend to spike in these years, too, as responsibilities and privileges increase.

This is the time, if we haven't done so already, to make that crucial transition from church school as a program that teaches the younger members what to think about Christ and the church — Bible stories, church doctrine and practice — to church school as a set of experiences that provide opportunities to practise how to think about Christ and his teaching in their lives.

A holy moment

A few years ago, we began sharing The Peace on a weekly basis during our worship service. It took a while before we Presbyterians became completely comfortable with it. Now, however, children and adults take part willingly and warmly. People reach over to those who are new or visiting and even move out of their pews and down or across the aisle. Almost every Sunday, at least one child stretches out his or her hand to share The Peace with me.



The CAN-DO KIDS, a midweek club for 5- to 12-year-olds at St. Andrew's Church, Hamilton, Bermuda, sing during a worship service.

One Sunday, I was about to return to the pulpit when I noticed tiny Ashley of senior kindergarten age purposefully coming down the aisle, arm outstretched. She headed toward Katelyn who was new to Fonthill, Ontario, and had recently entered junior kindergarten at Ashley's school. I stopped to watch as the two little girls, oblivious of the adults around them, shared The Peace. Truly, it was a holy moment.

— Elizabeth Kidnew, minister of Kirk on the Hill, Fonthill, Ont.

For further study and action

1. Make a list of the names of the 11- to 14-year-olds in your congregation. Make a commitment to meet and talk to at least one each Sunday.
2. Make a list of the gifts 11- to 14-year-olds can bring to a congregation.
3. Write or talk to your session and/or worship and music committee encouraging them to include young people in planning and participating in worship services.
4. The author says that in reaching and teaching 11- to 14-year-olds, we need to begin by talking about issues the affect their lives, that we should do less talking and more listening, and that we should provide opportunities for young people to ask questions. How does your congregation provide for this? What can you do personally to ensure this will happen?

Selected resources:

Arp, David and Claudia. *Suddenly They're 13, or The Art of Hugging a Cactus: A parent's survival guide for the adolescent years* (Zondervan, 1999). Support and information for parents of early adolescents, including specifics on development and "graduating kids into adulthood." From a Christian point of view, gentle, funny, practical ideas.

Brodkin, Margaret & Coleman Advocates for Children & Youth. *Every Kid Counts: 31 ways to save our children* (Harper Collins, 1993). Gives practical ways for parents and others to advocate for and act in support of children and youth in families, neighbourhoods and communities. Many of these ideas translate well into the church community.

Burns, Jim. *Radical Christianity: Living Your Life for the Ultimate Cause — Jesus Christ!* (Regal, 1996). High energy encounter with life-transforming Christian commitment, with a strong emphasis on setting priorities and developing integrity and self-discipline — done in an appealing and fun way.

Dockery, Karen. *The Youth Worker's Guide to Creative Bible Study* (Broadman & Holman, 1999). If you can't find one of the 350 ideas in here that will bring out the best in your 11- to 14-year-old youth and encourage them to seek God's will in his Word, then I give up! Everything from cootie-catchers to create-a-date.

Kise, Jane and Kevin Johnson. *Find Your Fit Discovery Workbook* (Bethany, 1999). This workbook designed for teens takes them through a Myers-Briggs-style personality and aptitude self-assessment that challenges youth to identify and use their gifts. Adults can try it, too!

Try using current events, popular song lyrics, ads from magazines, printed Web pages or movies as starting points for discussion. Begin with the world they encounter every day and invite their responses and commentary. Do less talking and more listening. Then, together, come back to God's Word to see what Scripture teaches about greed, conspicuous consumption, modesty, war, friendship. Show young people how you look things up in the Bible when you need guidance. Take them to the *Living Faith* statement for our church's accepted doctrine on social justice, community, sexuality and more.

The most immediate benefit for young teens is that starting with issues that affect their daily lives will give them a jumping-off place for bringing their values system into discussions with their peers. The long-term benefit is in showing them how intimately and practically their desire to follow Christ can shape their daily lives, and that God is there with them through it all.

When adults talk to young people, we usually feel an urgent and well-intentioned desire to give them the answers we've fought hard to learn. But what young people want is an opportunity to come up with their own questions. They need help expanding their questions, extending their areas of enquiry and devising questions that lead them to larger truths and bigger questions. This is where adults come in.

Junior high (grades 6 through 8) is the point at which most young people who will leave the church as teenagers decide to do so. (The next critical point is the transition after high school.) Between 11 and 14 years old, boys and girls are making their first forays into the opinions, ideas, habits and practices that will form their life-styles as adults. This is the point at which young Christians learn whether they're welcome in the church or not.

Think of it in terms of including older family members in the home. Do we look them in the eye and greet them by name with open arms, or do we turn our backs and walk into another room? Do we invite them to sit in a comfortable, appropriate chair, or do we make all family members sit on the floor because that's what we prefer? We accommodate our elders with the generosity of spirit and genuine respect to which they are entitled. Let's do the same for younger family members, to let them know how welcome they are to share our church home and our faith lives with us. We're richer for having their energy and vision in our midst. And who else will remind us that some in the temple once viewed Jesus as a smart-alecky 12-year-old, telling his elders-and-betters how the world ought to be run? R

Susan and Hannah Atkinson are members of Knox Church in Woodstock, Ont. Susan is a free-lance writer.

Signs of hope in a troubled world

by Deborah Rubin Fields

German and Israeli high school students visit each other's countries

Summer is a good time to meet new people. Ample free time and good weather facilitate the making of new acquaintances. Given these two big pluses, it's amazing to learn to what length some teens still go to meet other teens. Take, for example, the group of about 30 German and Israeli high school students who visited each other's cities for two weeks respectively in 1999.

Don't be under the mistaken impression that these young people simply boarded a plane and flew off. Their trips were part of an organized international student exchange program sponsored by the Jerusalem and Munich municipalities. This was an exchange in the classic sense, with each participant being given the opportunity to act as both host and guest for a two-week period. Not only did the students provide each other with food and lodging, they also travelled together, seeing the attractions of each other's countries. All in all, they received a brief, but satisfying taste of each other's cultures.

Before the actual exchange, the Israeli students, who all attended Denmark Comprehensive High School, participated in two months of weekly seminars. These seminars were multifocused. First, the students examined the circumstances that led to the Holocaust. Second, they examined Israeli/German post-war relations. (With most other Israeli high school delegations, the preparatory seminars concentrate primarily on the war years.)

Significant emphasis was likewise placed on being both knowledgeable hosts and courteous guests. Thus, Jerusalem students boned up on Israeli history and politics. They also learned they were representing (1) themselves, (2) Denmark Comprehensive High School, (3) the city of Jerusalem, (4) the State of Israel and (5) today's Jewry. While these teens were told to enjoy the trip abroad, they were also told they were junior ambassadors.

The German students attended high schools throughout Munich. Moreover, while Jerusalem students were all in the same grade, the Munich students were in different grades. As the study of the Second World War is an integral part of the German school curriculum, the German delegation focused on its visit to Israel. As a group, the German students came to Israel knowledgeable and sensitive to Jewish customs and holidays, a testimony to the attention this visit received.

Erez saw these exchanges as a way of bringing Jews and non-Jews together. He believed that once people were acquainted they would get along

Needless to say, for many Israelis, the issue of German/Jewish relations is still a sensitive one. Besides the national attention given to the Holocaust, there are many survivors and children of survivors living in Israel. Given that the subject of Germany raises strong feelings, I asked members of both the Israeli and the German delegations why they thought such exchanges were important.

Tomer explained he went to Germany



Photo: Deborah Rubin Fields

to learn about the Holocaust. He said he didn't want to rely on the stories he had *heard* about the Holocaust. He wanted to "see with my own eyes" what had happened in Germany. Visiting the Dachau concentration camp, in his words, had been "terrible."

From a different perspective, Carolin explained she had come to Israel to "see a different culture." A few of the German students noted that friends had encouraged them to visit Israel. In each case (with the exception of one boy whose father came to Israel on business), these teens were the first in their families to visit Israel. Matthias (German) stated he really enjoyed the Dead Sea. Katharina (German) commented she especially liked the Arab market in Jerusalem's Old City. Claudia echoed the feeling of all six Germans interviewed in saying she really liked visiting places mentioned in the Bible.

In light of recent anti-Semite acts in both Europe and the United States, I questioned the students about whether exchange delegations help curb anti-Semitism or improve Jewish/Christian relations. Yitzhik (Israeli) felt the exchanges do not improve the situation as the participants are already pro-Israel or at least favourably inclined toward Jews. Erez (Israeli), however, saw these exchanges as a way of bringing Jews and non-Jews together. He believed that once people were acquainted they would get along.

Veronika (German) pointed out that, before she came, she "was a little afraid" of how Israelis would receive her. She reported, however, that her fears were unfounded. Matthias added that it had been easy to speak English in Israel.

So how does one summarize the above opinions? In some ways, the aftermath of the summer's exchange says it all. One German student has been studying Hebrew all year in preparation for a year of volunteering in Israel. At least another two German students are trying to raise money for another trip to Israel, while two of the Israelis returned to Germany in August. Moreover, to further their knowledge of the Holocaust, a number of the Israeli students are participating in an autumn mission to Poland.

Finally, consider the comment of one of the German students. According to Veronika, "It's amazing all these different groups [in Israel] get together." Perhaps this, then, is the meaning of these youth exchanges: trying to "get together" or to make peace with different people and with one's own. R

Deborah Fields, a writer based in Israel, writes feature articles for the youth magazines of the *Jerusalem Post*.

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Soliloquy

On the shore of the North Sea, Norddeich, Germany
December 31, 1945

Into the chill air I stepped, spoke to the sentry
And walked on alone. The dike, frost-hard beneath,
Seemed high above the sea — the dark, flat, cold blue —
Below me sweeping distantly, infinitely westward
To a rim gleamingly golden,
Edged patchily, jaggedly, with clouds
Touched to brightness by the recent last sun of the year.
I walked in the dusk
Toward the gold of that far West and dreamily
I thought of what was there.
My home, my wife and, scarcely known, the girl and boy
I longed for.

In this land, alien, distant from all so dear, I wander.
Under my feet the ground is firm, sure. I do not hesitate.
The glow of such far beauty shines to me here
And I walk with certainty.
But in between lies darkness. A sea unknown to me
Now makes that glowing distance unattainable.
The world is not unlike me, searching the distance,
Seeing there gold promise of an age glowing
With goodness in all — for all. Hoping hate and ignorance
May pass, as does this year, quickly from us.
Before us, like that far lighthouse, slim and black against the sky,
Light-tipped, significant of a way
Already mapped by a Mighty Captain, stand straight and high
Shining ideals. Over the future's dark obscurity
Will there be men to seek these out? Having seen
The way prepared will they be warned from ways
Precarious with the dark and hungry crags of malice
And greed and hate reaching ravenously as fangs
To devour our small world yet once again in war?
Are there those great with love? Men whose way is straight?
Whose minds are true and comprehending? Whose hearts are good?

We might be led by such through the future's dark
Beyond its unknown, seeming impenetrable.

Onward to that future, seeming far,
Which, as a sky painted bright at sundown, now gleams
Golden — a brave new world.

Night's blanket folded closely round me and
I turned. Brightness shining from a window
Beckoned me. Slowly I followed the shaft of light.
Murmuring a greeting to the sentry I went in.

It was night.

— R. Douglas MacDonald

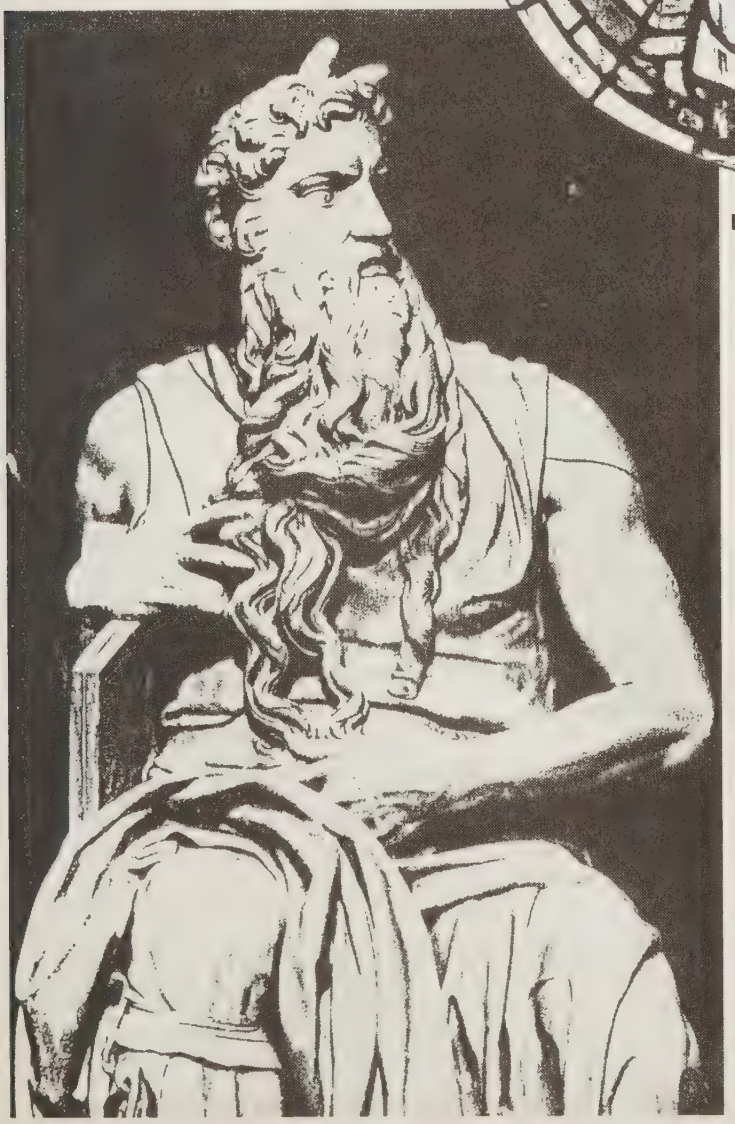
R. Douglas MacDonald, a retired minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, lives in Kincardine, Ont.

The Horned Moses



Right: **Moses holding the tablets of the Law. Part of the north rose window, Notre-Dame of Paris, c. 1250.**

Below: **The Moses of Michelangelo (c. 1515). S. Pietro in Vincoli, Rome.**



We encounter gospel truth in both mountaintop experiences and valleys of trials and suffering

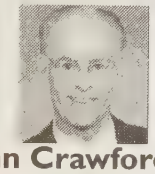
by Joseph C. McLelland

The two pictures that illustrate this column, one from Notre Dame Cathedral and the other from Rome, show a bizarre Moses with horns growing out of his head. This long tradition in the church has a curious history with a contemporary moral.

Moses had ascended the holy mountain and received the two tables of the Ten Words or Ten Commandments. He'd been in God's presence, closer than any other human. Now the Jews were so aware of the awesome nature of deity, they were afraid even to speak the name. (My Jewish students write simply G-D.) Instead they spoke of the *Shekinah*, the glory or light that surrounds God. When Moses came down from his close encounter with "He Who Is," his face was shining, a sort of reflection or afterglow of the divine presence. So strong was the effect he had to veil his face so as not to overpower the onlookers.

The Hebrew word for "shining" to describe his condition (Exodus 34:30) can also refer to "horns." Jerome translated it into Latin as *facies cornuta*, "horned face." He meant a beam of light, but its chief meaning is "horn" (as in "cornucopia"). Thus, a bad translation from Hebrew into Latin helped the legend of the horned Moses. The great Rabbi Solomon (Rashi) said, "The phrase 'the light-horned' is used here because light radiates from a point and projects like a horn." Rashi's disciple Comestor spoke of the "wonderful rays of splendour." Like the Shekinah. So Moses is shown with two long cones of light

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jutting out from his head. In medieval England, Aelfric's Old English translation said "the gehyrned Moses" to continue the tradition.

In time, it influenced the shape of the bishop's mitre — originally merely a staff, then with today's familiar curved horn. In the Roman Church, the prayer over a new bishop's mitre includes reference to the shining Moses, "[whom thou] didst adorn with the resplendent horns of Thy brightness and Thy Truth."

Michelangelo seized on the tradition as a fitting symbol for his powerful sculpture, though the horns are modest. Sigmund Freud was fascinated by the statue in Rome and wrote a fine little essay entitled "The Moses of Michelangelo." He is taken with the body language, the dynamic attitude as if he is about to jump up in anger (Moses has seen the Golden Calf and can scarcely contain himself). But, Freud concludes, he remains seated "in his frozen wrath." Now although Freud was proud of his Jewishness — he called himself another Joseph, interpreter of dreams — he missed the significance of the horns.

The horns or streams of light are like the halo round the heads of saints, signifying nearness to God, reflecting the divine glory. Epiphany, season of light, ends with the festival of Transfiguration, recalling Jesus' own experience on another mountaintop when he talked with Moses and Elijah and was bathed with light. In Eastern Christianity, this season of Epiphany is called simply *Ta Phôta*, "The Lights." Epiphany was celebrated as the Baptism of Christ, and used to be a time for baptisms when white robes were draped over new Christians, now purified and enlightened.

So Moses on Mount Horeb and Jesus on Mount Tabor shine with divine glory. Remember how Peter wanted to stay on the mountain to worship forever? Jesus replied, Stay if you like, I'm leaving! And he went down into the valley where the sick child awaited his healing touch. And wasn't the glory there, too, in the valley of illness and need, of doubt and despair? Maybe that's Christ's *true* glory, this gift of renewal and life.

All of us know mountaintop experiences as well as valleys of trial and suffering. The splendour touches us nearly when we encounter the truth of the gospel, or discover the beauty of holiness in worship or fellowship or prayer — and in human love, especially being loved by another. So we, too, are called into the twofold motion of grace: upward to higher truth and nobler deeds and greater love, back down into the valleys to meet the need of healing and comfort and justice. "For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." R

Joseph C. McLelland is professor emeritus of McGill University and The Presbyterian College, Montreal, and a contributing editor of this magazine.

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Mi'kmaq of the Conne River Band drum a solemn beat during the reading of the statement lamenting the lack of progress on debt forgiveness.

Listening to our stories

A historian reflects on an apology to native peoples

by A. A. den Otter

On Tuesday evening, September 5, 2000, the St. John's committee of the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative launched the third year of its program by arranging an apology ceremony between four church leaders and four aboriginal leaders, all resident in Newfoundland and Labrador. The event, which introduced the initiative's third-year theme "Right Relations With Aboriginal Peoples and With the Earth," attracted unexpectedly wide local and national media coverage. According to the press, it was the first reconciliation meeting in Canada between so many aboriginal and church leaders.

The evening gathering began with a lament for the slow progress in the cancellation of the debts of developing countries and with encouragement to continue the struggle. The climax came when Archbishop James Macdonald (Roman Catholic) read a short statement of reconciliation to the native people present. Flanked by Bishop Donald Harvey (Anglican), Rev. Clarence Sellars (United Church executive secretary) and myself as moderator of the Presbytery of Newfoundland, Archbishop Macdonald said we were embarrassed by past actions of the church, asked for forgiveness and promised to educate our people.

Chief Misel Joe of the Conne River Mi'kmaq Band graciously and eloquently accepted the apology and called for Canadians to grant his people dignity and pride. Todd Russell, speaking for the Métis of Labrador, also welcomed the declaration, expressing the wish this reconciliation would start a healing process that would help the Métis find their rightful place in Canadian society. Then, Innu Nation president Peter Penashue courteously dismissed the confession. He claimed church leaders did not know what they were apologizing for.

Penashue's charge that the statement was not an apology for specific abuses was correct. The declaration addressed only vague generalities. Unlike the confession the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada adopted in 1994, the Newfoundland statement of reconciliation did not expressly acknowledge that Canadian churches forced native people to relinquish traditional ceremonies and practices. On the other hand, the statement also did not express pride in the positive contributions missionaries have made to the spiritual nourishment and the education of Canada's aboriginal peoples.

General apologizing for the sins of our predecessors is a strange, ambiguous

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business. As a professor of Canadian history, I am aware of flagrant abuses of government and church power. I am often angered by the deliberate acts of injustice European newcomers inflicted on aboriginal people for selfish ends. Whenever there is a native student in the class, I feel embarrassed for these misdeeds. I am careful, however, not to create a distorted picture, a view that either overemphasizes the oppression of the indigenous peoples or over-romanticizes life in Canada's primal forests before Europeans arrived uninvited on North American shores. Most important, I do not want to foster a demoralizing victim mythology among aboriginal and non-aboriginal students.

Yet, as I listened to Peter Penashue's stories, I knew he was making a valid point. I squirmed under his calmly spoken words. It mattered little that his stories of horror involved only Roman Catholic priests who, having forgotten the love of their Master, mercilessly punished unwitting children or sexually abused vulnerable boys and girls. I knew that elsewhere in Canada, at some other time, members of my denomination similarly violated helpless children.

Unstated in the apology and unsaid in the responses, but nevertheless true, the Christian church did not always rely on the power of the Word of God itself to sway aboriginal listeners. Sometimes, the church forced its views upon them. Backed by the government, it wilfully destroyed some of the beliefs that buttressed indigenous culture. It did not then insist that the state and its citizens provide the material security and the economic opportunities for the First Nations to share equally in the new economy and society.

Yet, during the ceremony, I also remembered happier stories. I recalled tales of men and women who took Christ's great command to heart. Missionaries who, with a burden on their hearts for the spiritual welfare of the aboriginal tribes, endured unimaginable loneliness, suffered terrible hardships and tolerated ridicule for their beliefs. What about the story of the Methodist missionary at isolated Norway House, working late by dim candlelight, painstakingly carving the symbols of the syllabic alphabet out of wood so that his congregation could

read the gospel and sing the hymns of the faith? What about the Anglican priest at Cumberland labouriously chopping hundreds of large logs, dragging them out of the woods, floating them downstream, hauling them out of the river, then building a church and a schoolhouse?

With both good and bad stories swirling through my mind, I witnessed and supported the Newfoundland apology. While I could not accept personal responsibility for injustices committed by others, I could acknowledge past wrongs. I am truly sorry these misdeeds occurred. I also believe the first step to mending a broken relationship is to admit the wrong and ask for forgiveness. Moreover, non-aboriginal members of the current generation must ask their aboriginal peers for pardon because many of them have personally suffered the indignities of a marginalized, downtrodden minority.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Atlantic Mission Society several weeks after the reconciliation ceremony, Glen Davis, Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, reminded us that one of the functions of the church is to be the conscience of the state. But how can the church admonish the state for the abject material poverty and spiritual degradation of so many of its indigenous citizens unless it publicly acknowledges its own culpability?

When Presbyterians proceed on our Journey to Wholeness, we must continue to listen to the stories native people relate. And we must repeat these tales to our children and grandchildren so we do not forget them. Only after we have heard and told the stories over and over again will we be ready to listen to the happier stories native elders can tell us. Then they can speak to us of the memories passed from generation to generation, from time immemorial till today. Perhaps then, too, they will be prepared to listen to us and to accept our stories. Maybe, then, we can finally blend our histories into one.

The most poignant and significant moment for me came at the commencement of the reconciliation ceremony. While Winston White, representing the Labrador Inuit Association, carried a globe onto the stage, four young Mi'kmaq men drummed and chanted a welcome song. Sitting with a Roman Catholic and an Anglican bishop and with a United Church executive secretary about a metre from the drummers, my mind went back to an event more than 150 years ago. On a wintry November night, with a snowstorm swirling around his home in Grand Rapids, Red River (today's Manitoba), Rev. Robert James of the Anglican Church Missionary Society wrote in his journal: "At the commencement of winter these northern wilds are dismal indeed. Added to the sadness which today's scene of desolation begets, the rapid beats of Indian drums fell at intervals on our ears telling us too surely of a moral desolation and a spiritual winter reigning at no great distance."

Robert James's comment reflected his education, his training and his homeland society. He believed his civilization and his spirituality to be vastly superior to that of the indigenous North Americans. Happily, however, James did understand that the native people of the valley had to accept the gospel at their own time and in their own language. He may not have understood the complexity of their religion and their world-view, but he knew their oral culture could not withstand the onslaught of an industrialized, technological civilization that possessed the printing press. His gospel message aimed not only to save the natives' spiritual souls for eternal life but also their physical bodies, families and tribes for the contemporary world. Thus, he and his patient colleagues taught them to read and write their language. They spent countless hours collecting native words into dictionaries and, thereby, helped to preserve the Cree and Ojibwa languages.

As I listened to the young men (dressed in traditional clothes but modern sneakers) drumming and chanting their song, I realized it has taken us European newcomers 150 years or more to understand the native stories and to appreciate the complexity of the civilization that inhabited this continent thousands of years ago. How much longer will it take us to incorporate their stories into ours and translate them into justice for all? R

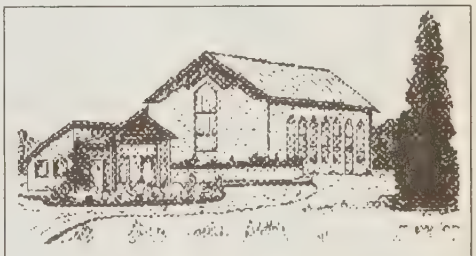
A. (Andy) A. den Otter is professor of history at Memorial University of Newfoundland, a member of St. David's Church in St. John's, and moderator of the Presbytery of Newfoundland.

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First of a six-part series on effective ways of communicating the Christian faith to children

My friend Eutychus



I've been thinking a lot about different people in the Bible lately — the winners and the losers, the heroes and the jerks. And, somehow, I see a bit of myself in all of them. I can run like Martha, put my foot in my mouth like Peter and, on a good day, even say a few words of encouragement like Barnabas.

But there is one little-known person I relate to more than the others — my friend Eutychus. He is not a hero. He's not an idiot. He's just, well, he's just like me. Eutychus got bored in church.

When the Apostle Paul was in Troas, all the Christians gathered to hear him speak. They were in an upstairs room lit with lamps. Eutychus knew he would need the fresh air, so he sat on the windowsill. And he listened. Or he tried. I try to listen in church, too.

And as the great Apostle Paul talked on and on, Eutychus began looking around the room, started counting the lamps, probably looked out the window to see what was going on in the street below. And Paul kept on talking. Eutychus couldn't get up and move around. He couldn't reread the bulletin or fiddle in his purse. He couldn't go down to the nursery to check on the kids.

But he didn't hear anything anymore. His head was full. His attention was lost. He closed his eyes. And, then, Eutychus did it — he fell asleep in church. Only this was more serious than the guy sleeping behind you last Sunday, because Eutychus was sitting on the edge of an open

by
Margaret Brouillette

Where there is no learning, there is no real teaching

window. He fell over and onto the ground three floors down. This is where we differ. I have never died. But in terribly long meetings, I have thought I might.

Having Paul as a guest speaker had its advantages even if he was long-winded. Eutychus was raised from the dead. And after a little snack, the meeting went on until morning. It was one of those stand-and-stretch coffee-breaks, with a miracle thrown in.

What amazes me about this story is not that Eutychus fell asleep, or even that he was raised from the dead, but that some of those people actually listened all that time. But they are not me. God understands that.

God programmed us differently. People learn by moving, by reading, by listening, by talking, by singing. And everyone learns by doing. Unfortunately, in churches, we love to talk on and on like the Apostle Paul; but we don't have the power to resurrect anyone we might lose along the way.

Eutychus was a different kind of learner and he would probably be a different kind of teacher. I would like to see him teach Sunday school.

Even better, I would like to see Jesus teach Sunday school. I have a feeling there would be more walks outside, more dialogue, more activity, more story-telling, more object lessons, more learning.

Where there is no learning, there is no real teaching. And, for learning to happen, the truth has to be communicated in the many ways learners are equipped to receive it. Only then does the truth change us.

I wonder if Eutychus learned anything from his all-night episode. He probably retained very little of what Paul said. I'm sure he did remember the power of God and the compassion of Paul that raised him from the dead. He must have appreciated in a new way the fellowship with his brothers and sisters as they broke bread together. But my guess is there was one lesson that really stuck — Eutychus learned to stay away from open windows! R

Margaret Brouillette is a mother, a public school religious education teacher and a Sunday school director in Saint Luc, Quebec. Her first book, *Famous Jerks of the Bible*, is due to be released next summer.

The enduring cross

by Patricia Schneider

Where Christmas and the Passion meet

It was to be a different sort of service. The first thing I noticed was the cross was no longer hanging centre stage of the sanctuary. The now cleared wall was to be a temporary screen for slides and songs used as part of the worship service.

Change is difficult for most of us. But we'd had four weeks of carols and Christmas trees, so most were willing to try something different.

And it was!

As the organ music of "In the bleak mid-winter" softly filled the sanctuary, the lights dimmed. Slide after slide displayed the beauty of a Canadian winter — red rose hips crowned with white, barely warm sunsets and snow, snow in the air, snow on the ground, children and dogs tumbling in snow.

Then, as "Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming" gently sifted across our ears, our eyes were filled with flowers — the butter-yellow of a daffodil, dainty blue wild-flowers, and roses, roses, roses … we could almost smell their scent.

Then, the mood changed as the notes of "Can a little child" carried us through scene after scene of children. Each face in the congregation lit up as these delightful gifts from God were projected before us.

The music died, and the sanctuary was dusty-dark. But, by the dim light, the shadow of the cross was faintly outlined on the wall. It had hung there for a long time, and a faint line of dust showed its outline on the plaster wall.

Behind all of God's creation of seasons, flowers and children was the cross. Christ's sacrificial death had made it possible for us to gather to recognize God's presence and to worship him.

The lights were brightened. The cross imprint faded. The congregation pulled to its feet as the words of "Joy to the world" were repeated once again.

Next week, the cross will hang in its usual place. But, for me, it was not gone last Sunday. Its imprint will always be there. R

Patricia Schneider is a free-lance writer living in Grande Prairie, Alta.


Jim Taylor

Seductive melodies

Most of us would rather go with the flow than swim against the current

During the years I lived in Toronto, I often thought I would like to sing in my church's choir. But for a variety of reasons, I didn't. I said I was too busy. I was a Scout leader, often away on weekend camps. I wanted to sit with my family in church. I travelled a lot on business.

Then we moved out here to the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia. Some of my new friends grabbed me by the arm and said: "We need you. We're forming a second choir. Come, join us." It wasn't a request. More like a command.

"OK," I agreed. "But just for a few special occasions."

That was seven years ago. I'm still in the choir, and loving it. But I've discovered something uncomfortable about myself.

Originally, this choir sang boisterous folk songs as an alternative to the more traditional pieces the existing choir tended to sing. We sang once a month. But as the other choir aged and its numbers declined, we found ourselves singing more often. And we wanted something more challenging than simply belting out lively tunes in unison.

I found I have a fairly good ear for a melody. But I have trouble carrying a part when we sing harmony. During rehearsal, I can learn my bass line fine. I have no competition, no distraction. But as soon as the sopranos start singing the melody, it takes over. I can't hear myself. My eyes still follow the notes on the page, but my voice wanders uncertainly off and chases that pesky melody.

I had to develop techniques to block out what others were singing. (I'm apparently not alone in that need. Another choir member told me he always turns off his hearing aid!) During the days I worked in radio, I learned from the announcers the trick of covering one ear so that my cupped hand amplified the sound of my own voice. I tried that in the choir. It worked. Except that people came up to me afterwards and asked: "Are you all right? I saw you holding your ear and wondered if you had an earache."



It's hard to be different deliberately. I sympathize with Kermit the Frog, who sang, "It's not easy being green."

After all, who wants to be known for not paying attention to what others are saying or doing? For being insensitive to what's going on around? It implies a kind of egotism, a self-centred arrogance.

Usually, we make fun of those who dance to a different drummer. Once, while visiting Barbados, I saw a man strolling down the sidewalk, his whole body gyrating to a melody that existed only inside his own mind. From the amused looks of others walking along that street, I gathered he'd probably been smoking something illegal. People smiled, and shrugged — and carefully avoided him.

Most of us, in my experience, would rather go with the flow than swim against the current. And, yet, like singing harmony in a choir, sometimes we have to be deliberately different. We have to switch off the pressures of the world around us. Pressures to spend more, buy more, own more, accomplish more. Pressures to worship the almighty dollar, to ignore the poor and powerless, to climb the ladder of success no matter how many fingers get stepped on.

You've probably heard the question — or, maybe it has been around so long it has become cliché — "If being a Christian were a crime, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" Would you be different from the culture around you? Or would you blend in, invisibly?

It's essential for at least a few people to find an alternative melody, a different way of living. The Apostle Paul understood this challenge nearly 20 centuries ago. "Do not be conformed to this world," he wrote in his letter to the Romans, "but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God … "

As someone else put it, "Christians must be in the world, but not of it." That's hard. Like many others, I like to be liked. If I could, I'd be a friend with everyone.

For someone who has trouble holding a part, it's not easy being different. R

Jim Taylor is a writer, editor and co-founder of Wood Lake Books.

Keith E. Boyer

Living in "an ocean of sadness"

Before the Presbyterian Church can move on, it needs to do the hard work of grief for the loss of Christendom and its glorious past

Having returned to Canada following a three-year church development ministry in New York City, I am alarmed by the increasing number of our churches that are marginally self-supporting. Some are seriously conflicted. Many are trying to do more with fewer resources. Others face impending budgetary crises that will require closure or amalgamation.

While statistics only tell part of the story, The Presbyterian Church in Canada began numerical decline in 1964. Many reasons for decline have been cited, including erosion of theological orthodoxy, inadequately trained clergy, loss of passion for evangelism or mission, a preference for comfort over change, failure to remain culturally current, lack of stewardship commitment, and the appeal of New Age spirituality, to name a few.

While reading Ann Lamott's *Travelling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith*, I began to connect the symptom to the disease. In a word, I believe our churches are in various stages of *grief*. We are grieving the death of Christendom. Lamott describes her experience of grief in relation to the death of a friend: denial, anger, mood swings, becoming insular and engaging in self-pity. She was also, unintentionally, describing many of our churches.

Several years ago, I was the celebrant at the funeral of a woman who had spent more than 50 years grieving the death of her fiancée, a pilot lost in the Battle of Britain. Although virtually housebound, she had few friends and infrequent visitors. She was known as a "difficult" person. She had spent most of her adult life in "an ocean of sadness," borrowing an image from Ann Lamott. It has been said "Time heals all wounds," but grief involves more than the passage of time. Grief is hard work, involving pain, fear, tears and prayer.

Conversations on the theme of "what used to be" with an emphasis on loss are often heard within the church. Memories of full sanctuaries, burgeoning Sunday schools, 30-member adult Bible classes, and community values restricting sports and shopping on the Lord's Day support feelings of nostalgia and grief for bygone days. Gone, too, is the time when many political, educational and economic institutions were founded, guided or controlled by Presbyterians or members of other mainline denominations. The excellent video *A Glimpse at the Family Photo Album: The Presbyterian Church at 125* recounts a glorious past. But that past has gone the way of Christendom, and much grief work remains to be done. The alternative is that we spend our remaining years as a denomination languishing in an ocean of sadness or in a sea of resentment and anger.

The good news is that grief can lead to the joy of a new reality

The good news is that grief can lead to the joy of a new reality. I think Ann Lamott is correct in observing that, because it is difficult, we try to avoid grief work by either being busy (restructuring?) or becoming fixated on something (homosexuality?). But genuine grief work is liberating. "You begin to cry and writhe and yell and then to keep on crying; and then, finally grief ends up giving you the two best things: softness and illumination."

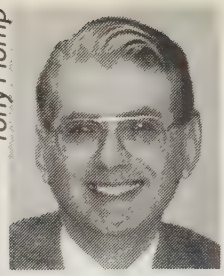
What does "softness and illumination" mean for the church? I think it describes the point in time when the Spirit of gentleness so prevails in the Body of Christ that a congregation becomes first and foremost a place of welcome, acceptance and sanctuary for all. It is in that space for grace, on the other side of grief, that the Spirit who calls from tomorrow is free to do the work of healing, renewal, liberation and re-imagining.

Is there reason for hope in the context of decline? Of course there is. We are an Easter people who live with the promise of resurrection. Grief is the threshold to new life following the death of Christendom. The Spirit calls us to go on.

You call from tomorrow; You break ancient schemes;
From the bondage of sorrow the captives dream dreams;
Our women see visions, our men clear their eyes;
With bold new decisions your people arise.

— James K. Manley

Keith E. Boyer is mission consultant for the Synod of Toronto and Kingston.


Tony Plomp

Old Bibles
and faded pulpit falls

question: *What is the correct, respectful way to dispose of old, worn Bibles? Burn? Bury in family grave? Recycle? Store them forever until my estate has to deal with them? And, of course, even then the question remains.*

Well, I must admit this is the first time I have had this question put to me! I remember debates at Knox College about how one should properly dispose of left-over Communion elements, but never Bibles!

Although it might have some appeal to present these old Bibles as a "burnt offering" to the Lord, "book burning" has a negative connotation for most of us. Some might also argue it only adds to the prevailing pollution of the atmosphere, however miniscule such additional pollution might be. I also see the appeal of burying them in the family grave, symbolic of your family's respect for and devotion to the word of God. However, if there are too many Bibles to fit into the casket, you might not receive the required permission from the authorities in charge of the cemetery. Leaving them for your family to dispose of seems to me to be unnecessarily unkind!

If you want those old, worn Bibles to be useful, I suggest you recycle them.

---

question: *What is the correct way to replace items (such as faded pulpit falls, threadbare Communion cloths or pew Bibles) donated to the church in memory of someone? Those who have made these donations are often upset when such items are replaced. But nothing lasts for ever and some things need to be replaced.*

I cannot tell you what the "correct way" is. It is a matter of judgment. But let me give you an example.

Around 1975, after the 1972 *Book of Praise* was published, our congregation decided to acquire the new hymn-book for congregational use. We asked for financial support from the congregation but also encouraged individuals to donate some books in memory of loved ones. There was an enthusiastic response and a good number of the hymn-books carried the inscription "Donated in Memory of ... by ..."

Then, after some 25 years, the church published a brand-new edition of *The Book of Praise* (1997). Again, we were among the first "to taste and see" this new thing. Again, we asked for financial support from the congregation and for individuals to buy hymn-books in memory of loved ones. It all came to pass as before.

But what about all those "old" hymn-books? Some, we sold to members of the congregation at cut-rate prices as a memento of what they still cherished. Others, we donated to a new extension congregation starting up. I believe we still have some remaining copies in the storage shed.

Another touchier question arose. What about all those old books donated in memory of loved ones? The solution was simple. We took note of all the memorial inscriptions in the old hymn-books and transferred their names to the new ones. We made reference to this when we dedicated the new *Book of Praise* in a special service of worship.

When a faded pulpit fall or threadbare Communion cloth needs to be replaced, the original donors, if still alive, could be approached. If they are not able to afford the replacement, the congregation can do so, while finding some way to honour the name of the organization or person who donated the original one, or the person in whose memory the donation was originally made.

I hope this helps. R

Editor's note: *International Ministries is collecting copies of the 1972* ***Book of Praise*** *for use by the church in Guyana.*

Please send questions for Rev. Tony Plomp to Tony_Plomp@telus.net or 4020 Lancelot Dr., Richmond, B.C. V7C 4S3.



A tree of hope

When the congregation of St. Andrew's Church, Pictou, Nova Scotia, decided to plant a Ginkgo biloba tree to commemorate the Millennium/Jubilee/125th Anniversary of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, it did some research first. Discovering that, although the tree is not common to the Canadian climate, it will grow in northern Nova Scotia, the congregation's *Celebrate!* committee set off in search of successful plantings in the area.

They didn't have to travel far — just north of the church was a nearly 200-year-old Ginkgo biloba. What's more, the tree had been planted by Sir William Dawson, famous as an early Presbyterian educator. Dawson had planted it as a tree of hope (which is one of the names for the species), and the St. Andrew's congregation honoured his hope in its own celebration on Thanksgiving Sunday.

The congregation needed the hope. As the tree was planted, the congregation looked up at a steeple that had been blasted by lightning 36 hours earlier. Yet, there was both hope and thanksgiving present. The church had avoided destruction and the congregation is confident its tree will flourish.

Minister's radio program drawing more listeners

The Hymn Book, a popular half-hour radio program produced and hosted by Glenn Cooper, minister of St. Andrew's Church, Westville, Nova Scotia, is hoping to attract more stations. The show airs on Sundays and can be heard in Nova Scotia on CJFX (AM and FM-stereo) in Antigonish at 7:10 a.m., and on CKEC in New Glasgow at 9 p.m. In Ontario, it airs at 6:30 a.m. on CHWO, Oakville, and CHOK, Sarnia.

The Hymn Book features music and commentary, with an emphasis on choral hymns. But it also features black gospel music, well-known classics from composers such as Bach and Mozart, and instrumental pieces ranging from full orchestration to "Shall we gather at the river" performed by the 48th Highlanders.

The mix is obviously working. One program director wrote that the number of listeners had doubled over one year. "As long as you keep producing *The Hymn Book*, we'll keep airing it."

Cooper says he would like to reach a wider audience, "but finding the time to promote it is much harder than finding the time to do the program itself."

Synod of Toronto and Kingston puts children and youth first

The Synod of Toronto and Kingston tapped into the laity for its new moderator when it elected Campbell Steele, representative elder from Zion Church, Sunnidale Corners, Ontario, at the synod's annual meeting held at Westminster Church, Sault Ste. Marie, October 17-19.

In keeping with the FLAMES initiative, the synod placed a special emphasis on young people. Youth delegates from each presbytery and from the Presbyterian Young People's Society (PYPS) executive were invited to sit in on the meetings and correspond. Unfortunately, only one presbytery sent youth delegates. However, although there were only two young adults present for the majority of the proceedings, there were several opportunities for them to speak — nine of the top 12 priority items identified for discussion were issues concerning youth.

Two workshops contributed to the topic of youth ministry: one, appropriately enough, on youth ministry, led by Miranda Farell-Myers; and, the other, on blended worship, led by Rev. Jim Czegledi. Rev. Glen Davis's sermon, "Let them come," also dwelt on today's youth, describing them as a multi sensory generation that has difficulty finding relevance in what goes on in church on Sunday mornings. According to Davis, young people often feel their minister is little more than a talking head.

Sadly, less than a week after the synod ended, the Toronto-Kingston PYPS lost a minister who was more than a talking head to them. Rev. Kevin Liscombe (Rev. Kev), minister of St. Andrew's Church, Roslin, and a PYPS adult adviser, died suddenly on October 25. (*From a report by Jen Bailie, Toronto-Kingston PYPS president*)

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Brightening up church offices

A stained glass window created by Jake Vanderzweerde was dedicated during the regular Wednesday worship service at church offices on September 20. A window in Tokyo Korean Church inspired the stained glass hanging, which depicts Jesus washing the feet of a disciple. With Jake (centre) are Don Taylor (left), chief financial officer of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and Ian Morrison, general secretary, Life and Mission Agency. Jake's wife, Margaret, is area liaison missionary for India and Nepal.

Third Presbyterian African Heritage celebration planned

Following the success of the previous two years' Presbyterian African Heritage celebrations, the "Created for Life" youth ministry of University Church, Toronto, is presenting a third celebration on February 10-11 at Knox Church, Toronto.

Based on words from Ezekiel 34, the celebration's theme will be "A new beginning! Searching, gathering and feeding." The theme calls upon Presbyterians to join with their brothers and sisters of African heritage in moving forward into the 21st century modelling God's vision of a just society.

On Saturday, February 10, a series of seminars and workshops, as well as a worship service will take place from 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. On Sunday, a worship service will be held at 3 p.m., with guest preacher Rev. Diane Moffett, associate minister of Elmwood Presbyterian Church, East Orange, New Jersey.

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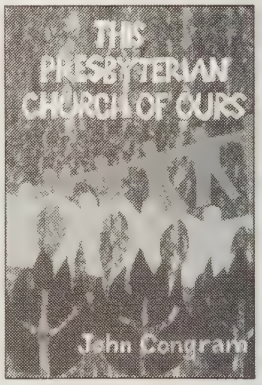
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Assembly Council discusses residential schools litigation

Among the issues discussed at the Assembly Council meeting held November 26-28 was the residential schools' legacy and the church's role in reconciliation. The Presbyterian Church in Canada is currently facing 16 lawsuits, representing about 80 plaintiffs. The total number of residential school lawsuits facing the government is between 7,000 and 8,000.

All of the suits against the Presbyterian Church also name the federal government. They are all civil suits alleging cultural abuse. A few allege physical and/or sexual abuse. No criminal charges or convictions have been present with respect to these suits or related to Presbyterian-run schools (i.e., Birtle Residential School, northwest of Brandon, Manitoba, and Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School, outside Kenora, Ontario). Although it is difficult at this time to assess the impact of the suits, it is unlikely that the financial viability of the denomination is in danger.

The church is committed to finding alternative ways in dealing with the claims. There have been preliminary discussions with Deputy Prime Minister Herb Gray (who has been appointed liaison with the churches) and several departments of the federal government, in co-operation with the Anglican, Roman Catholic and United churches. The churches hope to resolve legal issues outside the courts so they can carry on with a ministry of healing and reconciliation. Ian Morrison, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, and Glen Davis, Moderator of the 126th General Assembly, have been encouraged by their meeting with Matthew Coon Come, chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

In order to keep the whole church informed on the denomination's journey to wholeness, a letter from Stephen Kendall, principal clerk of the General Assembly and general secretary of the Assembly Council, has been sent to all congregations.

Nominees for Moderator

The nominees for Moderator of the 127th General Assembly are: Maureen Kelly, an elder from St. Andrew's Church, Brampton, Ont.; Rev. Mark Lewis, minister of MacNab Street Church, Hamilton, Ont.; Rev. Joe Reed, area liaison missionary for Central America and the Caribbean; Rev. Helen Smith, minister at Evangel Hall, an inner-city mission in Toronto; Rev. Glynis Williams, co-ordinator, Action Réfugiés Montréal.

Computers for Ukraine began with FLAMES tour

A FLAMES mission tour to Eastern Europe last May has reaped benefits for Ukrainian high school students. A shipment of 15 computers arrived in Ukraine in early November.

It began when the tour visited a Christian high school in Beregszasz. Thanks to donations from a Dutch church, the school was undergoing a major expansion. The computer lab caught the eye of Rev. Robert Dawson of Brant Hills Church, Burlington, Ontario, and Keith Knight of church offices. It consisted of a dozen antiquated computers. The two men vowed to see if the lab could be improved.

Once back in Canada, Dawson secured a donation of 15 Pentium-350 computers from the Royal Bank. Meanwhile, Knight worked with Presbyterian World Service and Development as well as with Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) to arrange the shipment.

The computers were delivered to the Christian Reformed national office in Burlington in October and were loaded into a container destined for Eastern Europe. Jacob Kramer of CRWRC flew to Ukraine in early October to meet with David Pandy, International Ministries staffperson in Eastern Europe, to look at the potential for new joint efforts between PWS&D and CRWRC. Pandy was to handle the distribution of the computers once they arrived.

PWS&D director Rick Fee says the joint effort surrounding the shipment is an indication of what can be accomplished through interdenominational initiatives.

briefly noted

Mission staff arrivals and departures
Arrivals: *Arlene Onuoha,* from Nigeria, Jan. 7.
Departures: *Betty and Jack Geddes,* for Taiwan, Jan. 8; *Lillian Sparling,* for Malawi, Jan. 12.

Reputed to be Presbyterian MPs: *Roger Gallaway,* Sarnia-Lambton; *Charles Hubbard,* Miramichi; *David Kilgour,* Edmonton Southeast; *John Manley,* Ottawa South; *Karen Redman,* Kitchener, Centre. (Did we miss anyone? Please let us know.)

Retired (and "retreating"): *Rev. Paul Scott,* minister of St. Columba-by-the-Lake, Pointe Claire, Que., Dec. 17. Planning to build a small retreat centre at Mountain Grove, Ont., for ministers, lay leaders and small groups.

Recognized: *Rev. Kenneth G. McMillan,* with the surprise presentation of a plaque by World Vision Canada for "his example as a Christian leader and contribution to the spiritual life of World Vision Canada."

Millennium quilt exhibit

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January 16-24
Knox Church, Lloydminster, Alta.

January 26 – February 7
Knox Church, Red Deer, Alta.

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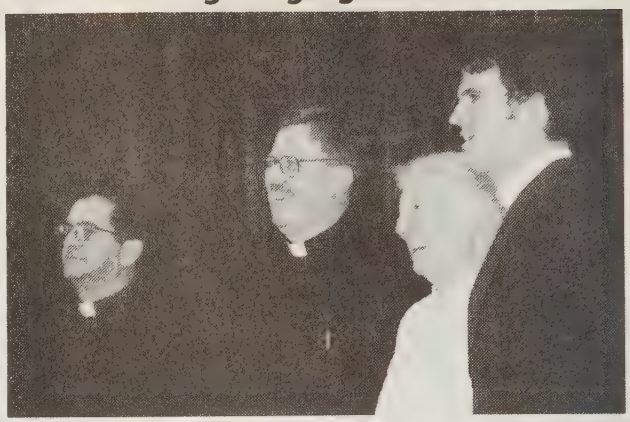
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New minister for PCC's most far-flung congregation



A church many Presbyterians would love to attend at this time of year welcomed a new minister when Rev. Duncan Jeffrey was inducted at St. Andrew's Church, Hamilton, Bermuda, on September 17. Pictured with Duncan (second from left) are: Rev. Lincoln Resende (left), moderator of the Presbytery of West Toronto; Rev. Nora Gorham, interim moderator of St. Andrew's; and Rev. Will Ingram, minister of Morningside-High Park Church, Toronto, who gave the charge.

news scan

Canadian Women's Inter-Church Council publishes "ecumenical feminist journal"

A new quarterly journal called *Making Waves* has been published by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. In the inaugural editorial, the magazine expresses the hope that "the widespread community of friends and feminist theologians and church organizers and homemakers and radical seekers of God will embrace [its] vision of a cross-Canada network of women and men seeking gender justice in church and society."

Don't blame Luther for Big Macs

Rome's Lutheran pastor has rallied to the defence of Martin Luther, whose theology was blamed by a Roman Catholic theologian for America's fast-food culture. The claim that the "Protestant cultural model" was responsible for the fast-food culture attracted world-wide attention, with one newspaper proclaiming "the excommunication of the hamburger." Now, the pastor of Rome's Lutheran congregation has hit back. "I find it very difficult to imagine Martin Luther sitting down all alone at a small, metal table eating a Big Mac," he said. "You always need someone to take the blame for the ills of humanity and this time, once again, it's our dear Martin Luther who is the target — the person who became famous because of his 'table talk' and who preached gratitude for the gifts of the Creator." (*ENI*)

Reports of church council's death somewhat exaggerated

Predictions of the demise of the U.S. National Council of Churches (NCC) — the country's main ecumenical agency — due to a long-standing financial crisis will not be proven true, according to Robert Edgar, the organization's general secretary. In an interview with *Ecumenical News International* following the NCC's assembly in Atlanta, November 14-17, and almost a year after assuming the senior position in the NCC, Edgar said the council has done much in the past year to improve its troubled position. (*ENI*)

Do they come with matching sandals?

Among the many kinds of scriptures marketed this holiday season are leather-bound Bibles with shoulder straps for women to carry like a purse. "We've even got beautiful little pastel-coloured leather shoulder-strap Bibles for girls that kids think are just the bomb!" says Craig Featherstone, marketing vice-president at Thomas Nelson Bibles in Tennessee. (Source: *Globe and Mail*)

Mackay collection to be exhibited in Taiwan

Like many Victorian-era travellers, Dr. George Leslie Mackay, the Canadian Presbyterian medical missionary who first arrived in Taiwan in 1871, shipped artifacts home that once belonged to the island's Han Chinese and aboriginal population. His collection, which includes textiles, religious statues, utensils and head ornaments, was stored at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) for decades. Now, as part of the celebration marking the 100th anniversary of his death on June 2, the ROM's collection will be exhibited in Taipei.

During a visit to Taiwan last May, ROM's senior curator Trudy Nicks said she was struck by the respect paid to Mackay's memory. The Mackay Memorial Hospital in Taipei contains a museum acknowledging his early work, and his medical clinic, where some of his equipment remains on display, is a historical site. There are also statues in his honour.

"This exhibit will be important for contemporary people to see," said Nicks. "Mackay was committed to the country." (Source: *Maclean's*)

Margaret revealed

The framed explanation that hangs on the wall beside the statue of Margaret Wilson at Knox College, Toronto, begins, "Copied by an unknown artist … " This prompted William Blain, an elder at Knox Church, Waterdown, Ontario, to wonder if the statue was really a copy and why, after 62 years in which the statue has resided at Knox College, the sculptor was still unknown. For Blain, it was the start of an interesting summer project.

It began at Church Archives, where he discovered the original 1938 correspondence between Senator A. C. Hardy of Brockville, Ontario, donor of the statue, and Rev. Dr. T. Eakins, principal of the college. The letter provided two somewhat ambiguous clues: the statue had been shown at a World's Fair in Chicago (but was it the 1893 or the 1933-34 fair?), and it had been reproduced for a John Morgan Richards for his home in London (Ontario or England?). Blain spent numerous hours searching for information on the Internet, as well as corresponding by e-mail and post with institutions and individuals from Chicago to Edinburgh, and many points in between.

Blain's research was exhaustive and he learned a lot about the people involved with Margaret's statue. In the end, he concluded with "considerable certainty" that the statue of Margaret Wilson at Knox College is not a copy but an original study, a significant work of Victorian art created by a noted British sculptor, Charles Bell Birch, ARA (1832-1893).

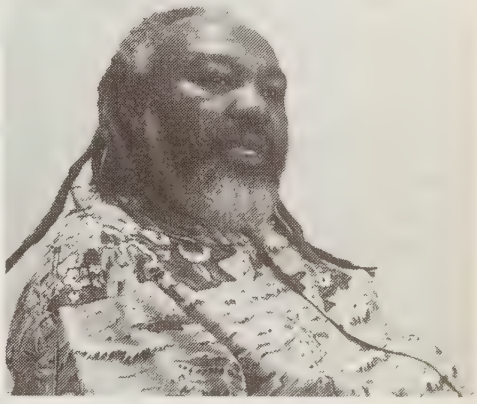
WCC general secretary expresses solidarity in search for residential school healing

Konrad Raiser, general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) has written a letter to WCC member churches in Canada — the Anglican, Presbyterian and United churches — expressing "ecumenical solidarity" with their "efforts to find just and viable responses" to the residential schools lawsuits. "We are reassured to see the strength of ecumenism in Canada as we read of your and other churches' efforts to work together in confronting this challenge in a responsible way," the letter stated.

The letter went on to say: "We believe that churches around the world have much to learn from your witness as you explore alternatives to adversarial court proceedings to bring about needed reconciliation … You have publicly admitted and apologized for your part in their tragedy, often as instruments of the Canadian government's educational system."

Raiser concluded his letter by assuring the Canadian churches the WCC's thoughts and prayers are with them as they "seek faithfully to contribute to healing the wounds of the past and to stand with the indigenous people of Canada in their continuing struggles for justice."

Kenyan human rights activist visits Canada



G. G. Njugna Ngengi, a longtime human rights activist from Kenya who has been imprisoned, beaten and caned several times by government agents, came to Canada last September to receive medical treatment. Ngengi's doctors had indicated they could not guarantee his safety at the hands of government doctors if he entered hospital in Kenya. His wife, children, sister and other relatives have also suffered torture as a result of their human rights activities.

According to Ngengi, the Church of East Africa Presbyterian (a partner church of The Presbyterian Church in Canada) is very strong in the area of human rights. Sadly, the church has few material resources to aid the 400,000 refugees who have been thrown off their farms by Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi.

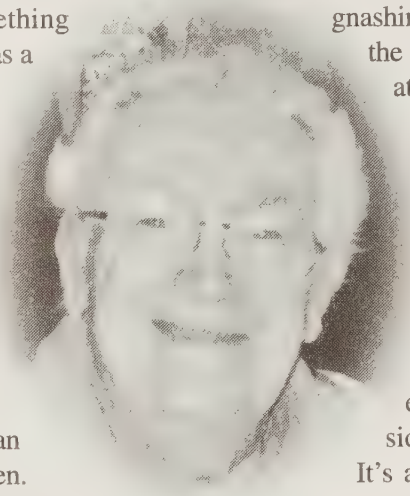
A one-time friend of Moi's, Ngengi now considers the president an enemy who rules by deceit and graft. He is surprised that Canada, one of the world's leading democracies, still maintains a friendly relationship with the Kenyan ruler.

Andrew Foster

Remembering Margaret

A ministry of hospitality

The last day of the special committee meeting was a Sunday, and eight exhausted people gathered for Communion. It was an intimate, moving service, conducted by a seasoned minister who knew how to calm people down. Instead of a sermon, we went around the room telling stories of other memorable meals in our lives. Everyone had a story, and there were even a few tears as we listened to each other. None of us had planned anything, and we simply said what came to mind. Mine was about Margaret. The work of the Special Committee on Sexual Orientation was something Margaret Manson cared about deeply, and it was a good occasion to be remembering her.



A few years ago, I returned to Montreal to work for a few months and often had to stay in the city for the weekend. It was natural to worship with our former home congregation of St. Columba-by-the-Lake and to enjoy the good preaching and one of the warmest congregations on this planet. Any friend or stranger passing through usually caught the attention of Margaret. She soon knew if some hospitality was needed, and it usually came as an invitation to lunch. I found I needed it quite often.

Her house could be mistaken for a Presbyterian orphanage. All the drop-ins and drop-outs gathered there, invited or otherwise. There was never a warmer welcome than the one you'd get from her eclectic household. There was always something more to add to the soup pot if someone unexpected showed up, and people often did. Her Sunday lunch table was better than a General Assembly and usually had most of the elements of one present. Lunch could last until the late evening, turning into dinner when necessary, with people coming and going the whole time. The little group of people who have lived in her house from time to time were — still are! — lively, fun, eccentric and a living portrait of a church that is easy to love. She seemed utterly content to be surrounded by them.

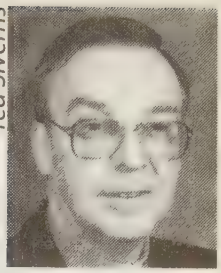
A special occasion was the time of the troubles in the Presbytery of Montreal over the St Andrew's, Lachine, business. Many of the major players were frequent guests at Margaret's. On the nights when the open meetings were held, we all piled into cars and headed into Montreal for the inevitable fireworks. When it was over, we all went back to Margaret's, someone was sent out for a case of beer and we all sat down to thrash the thing out yet again. A certain Presbyterian dignitary was with us on one of the occasions, and soon mellowed to an extent that no one present could remember having witnessed before. It was a good antidote to a stressful occasion. Margaret's ministry of comfort worked in many different ways.

She was a peaceful person most of the time but, one time, she caused a memorable rumpus that left a lot of people gnashing their teeth. There had been controversy over the proper place for the statue of Margaret Wilson at Knox College in Toronto. Being a tangible matter, the passion of the commissioners to the 1994 General Assembly was rapidly inflamed. Margaret's dry comment in her report of the Committee on Theological Education to the effect that "It is not appropriate for the Assembly or this committee to instruct colleges on what they should do with furnishings" caused at least one commissioner to choke on suppressed laughter and a considerable number of others to howl with rage. It's all there in the Acts and Proceedings — you can read about it. She was always a schoolteacher, dispensing penetrating wisdom, the occasional gentle chastisement and much comfort to many.

Margaret died last February after a long struggle with leukemia. She died as she lived, with dignity and concern for the people around her.

My story to the little group sharing Communion ended with telling about another dinner. Some of us now live too far away to have attended her funeral. The only thing to do was to have a dinner. A group of friends who knew her, and some who didn't but enjoyed hearing about her, gathered to remember her with the help of plenty of food and wine. The wording of the grace wasn't planned, but the only thing to say suddenly became obvious. We gave thanks not only for our table and the people around it, but for Margaret's table, too. R

Andrew Foster, who enjoys good food, good company and bad wine, is an elder in St. Andrew's Church, Cambridge, Ont.



Ted Siverns

Jeremiah & other odd characters — maybe you

It appears God can be very demanding and does not finish sentences with "Have a nice day"

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Did Jeremiah have a well-balanced life? At a recent gathering of clergy, participants were advised to work and play in such a way that we would have well-balanced lives. I thought of Jeremiah and even you, dear reader. Should you seek a balance that brings, above all else, peace and contentment?

Jeremiah's time was approximately 626-581 BC. At this time, Judah was affected by barbarous movements in the north, which seemed to Jeremiah like a seething cauldron with evil boiling over its edge (Jeremiah 1:13-15). He warned that the kingdoms of the north would set their thrones at the gates of Jerusalem (1:15). Indeed, in about 620 BC, the Scythians reached south to the very borders of Egypt but, with a combination of battle and bribe, they returned to the north. A little later, however, in 587 BC, Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians.

Through all of this time and these events, Jeremiah insisted God was part of the political mix. Was Jeremiah "balanced" — happy and well-adjusted at his task? It doesn't seem so.

Jeremiah 1:4-10 is a passage that appears in the lectionary for the end of January. It is the account of the call of Jeremiah and partly explains how and why Jeremiah lost his balance. God had a task for him, but Jeremiah naturally said no to God. He trotted out his reasons, including his age and speaking ability. Could you blame him? What would be reasonable terms for this kind of work? The passage promises nothing to Jeremiah; yet, in the poetic words of the text, God claims to have had this scheme in mind for ever and a day and tells Jeremiah to forget the objections, do the work and not be afraid.

This is not an isolated example of the stubbornness of God and the reluctance of his messengers faced with a usually hostile reception. Micaiah is "hated" by the king (Jehoshaphat) because "he never prophesies anything good about me ... " (I Kings 22:8). Isaiah's response to God's call was "Woe to me!" (Isaiah 6:5). Ezekiel was warned that he was being sent to a people who were "obstinate and stubborn" and "rebellious" (Ezekiel 2:4, 7). Daniel was "troubled" and "disturbed" by his visions (Daniel 7:15). The list is easily expanded.

It appears God can be very demanding and does not finish sentences with "Have a nice day." In return for the task of reminding others of sin and death, and personal and corporate responsibility, God does not promise life lived in peace. In return for the demanding call to understand and critique society, God promises not a well-balanced life but participation in the hurt of those who hurt (Jeremiah 8:22 - 9:1) — the "ministry of articulated grief" (Brueggemann).

In return for the task of reminding others of sin and death, and personal and corporate responsibility,

God does not promise life lived in peace

It has been claimed that the role of religion is to lead people to a well-balanced personality, but the lives of many — including Jeremiah, Paul and Jesus — do not suggest this. "Spiritual health is good; mental assurance is good. But the summons of faith is neither to an integrated personality nor to the laying by of all questions, but to the dedication of personality — with all its fears and questions — to its duty and destiny under God" (John Bright). Who can live a balanced life when, willing or not, he or she carries the burden of proclaiming the preferences of God?

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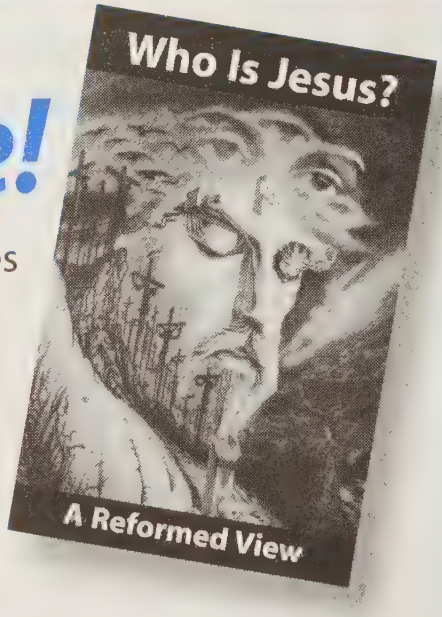
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Balanced? The prophets presented their message in dramatic ways. Ezekiel's visions were related to his act of eating a scroll of judgment (Ezekiel 2:1-3:3). Isaiah walked in a loincloth to demonstrate the humility coming to his people. Ezekiel lay on his left side for 390 days and on his right side for 40 days to show the coming privation and punishment. Jeremiah wore an ox yoke to demonstrate the coming domination by foreign powers.

It was, however, what the prophet said rather than how he said it that is most important. It often meant they ran against the stream at some risk to themselves. Phillips Brooks understood the nature of the vocation to be a servant of God:

> Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger [people]. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you yourself shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life which has come to you by the grace of God. R

For discussion and reflection

- Elie Wiesel observed that we ought to be reading Jeremiah since his world is closest to ours. In what ways might this be true?
- Have we too often encouraged balance at the cost of vocation? Or, at least, adjusting to the culture rather than challenging the culture?

L. E. (Ted) Siverns is the minister of First Church in New Westminster, B.C.

Welcome to
St. Andrew's Penticton, British Columbia
a new member of the *Record*'s Every Home Plan

From Nicaragua, with love

Learning more about a world that needs us all

Nestled in foothills about 100 kilometres from the country's capital city of Managua, the village of Chaguitillo, Nicaragua, is seemingly worlds away from the *joie de vivre* of Boulevard St. Laurent in Montreal or the natural beauty and carnival atmosphere of Niagara Falls. But, when Luis Perez, a young man from Chaguitillo, came to Canada last summer to attend Canada Youth 2000 (CY2K) in St. Catharines, Ontario (and visit places such as Montreal and Niagara Falls), it was another example of the deepening relationship between Chaguitillo and The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC). In fact, for more than a decade now, the village has been a centre of activity for the PCC. Youth in Mission delegations have visited, young people have served there and several Nicaraguan students have received scholarships to Canadian universities. One congregation even built a basketball court.

It should come as less of a surprise, then, that not everyone Luis met during his trip was a stranger. The previous year, he had served as a guide, interpreter *and* friend to a Youth in Mission delegation visiting Nicaragua. He was eager to see his Canadian acquaintances again.

And those who were strangers, such as the people of Coldwater, Ontario, and the congregation of St. Andrew's Church, quickly became friends. Luis stayed in Coldwater prior to CY2K and was relieved to discover, "Hey, in your summer, the water isn't cold at all!"

For Luis, who is active in the local Episcopal church, the trip to Canada was important in the development of his faith and to his maturing process. "To be able to meet people of different ages, backgrounds and countries helped open my thinking to a world in constant movement," he says. "I had always dreamed of such a trip and I had often asked the Lord for a chance to learn more about a world that needs us all so much."

Luis was one of four international guests at CY2K and a participant in the conference's mission track. He considers the events he attended a great step in bringing young people together in community service. Although there is "so much to be done," he believes, "step by step, we can build the world for which we all long."

"To speak about the importance for each of us to attain our goals, even those that seem beyond our reach, and to speak about walking toward a new horizon would not mean anything without God in our hearts," Luis says. "He is the engine in our lives pushing us to give our best … and to share with our brothers and sisters his truth, love, strength and wisdom. In that way, we can shine so that his light can reach even those who think they have no need of it."

"To speak about the importance for each of us to attain our goals, even those that seem beyond our reach, and to speak about walking toward a new horizon would not mean anything without God in our hearts"



Luis returned to Nicaragua grateful for having had the opportunity to realize a dream. He took with him "many happy experiences" and left behind his "deepest thanks" to the PCC for making the trip possible and to everyone who made his stay in Canada memorable. He also left behind this message: *"Si vives en al amor entonces, Dios vive en ti.* If you live in love, God lives within you."

And, oh yes, he didn't say goodbye — he said, "Until next time." R

Based on reports by Luis Perez and Joe Reed, area liaison missionary for Central America and the Caribbean.



REV. DAVID THOMPSON'S 17 years of service to Stratford and community were celebrated at a reception hosted by Knox Church, Stratford, Ont. David and his wife, Louise, are joined by the members of the Casino Jazz Band, who provided some of the entertainment for the evening.

FOR THE SECOND year in a row, members of the youth group from Langley Church, Langley, B.C., travelled to McLeese Lake to run a week-long vacation Bible school. The trip, conducted in partnership with the Cariboo house church ministry, has expanded to serve more of the community, with the team offering to do work projects for community members.



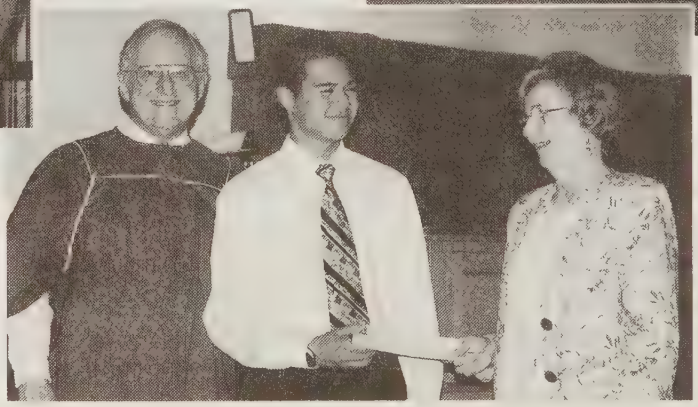
A STAINED GLASS QUILT depicting the "Fanning the FLAMES" banner was dedicated in memory of former WMS members at Amos Church, Dromore, Ont. Janet Moore (pictured), a member of the congregation, created the quilt using new techniques and some rare fabric.







THE CONGREGATION OF St. David's Church, Toney River, N.S., celebrated its 178th anniversary. Michael Henderson (centre), a student at The Presbyterian College, Montreal, was the guest speaker. He is pictured with clerk of session James Fraser and Rev. Jeanette Fleischer.



THE ANNUAL Lorne Dotterer Music Scholarship at Knox Church, Goderich, Ont., was presented this year to Harvey Ng. Harvey, who holds an associate diploma from the ARCT in piano and is currently pursuing the Grade VIII diploma in organ, is planning a career in church music. Presenting the award are John McIntosh, director of music, and Bonnie Dunn, chair of the music committee.

Please note: Photos submitted for People & Places must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they are to be returned. Also, please try to ensure all pictures are clear and do not include a multitude of people. Colour or black-and-white photos are acceptable, but negatives and slides cannot be used. Thank you.

THE CONGREGATION OF St. John's Church, Medicine Hat, Alta., held a 125th anniversary service for The Presbyterian Church in Canada in June. Members of the congregation are pictured beneath a "Fanning the FLAMES" banner made by St. John's Celebrate 2000 task force. The congregation also fashioned FLAMES denim shirts, T-shirts, golf shirts and sweatshirts (seen on some of the members).





FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES of Tamiko Corbett celebrated with her when she received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree at the Knox College Convocation. In the front row with Tam (centre), who served as Moderator of the 122nd General Assembly, are Margaret MacNaughton (left) and Flora Whiteford. Behind them are (L to R): Leone How, Donna Wells, Sandra Demson, Helen Tetley and May Nutt.

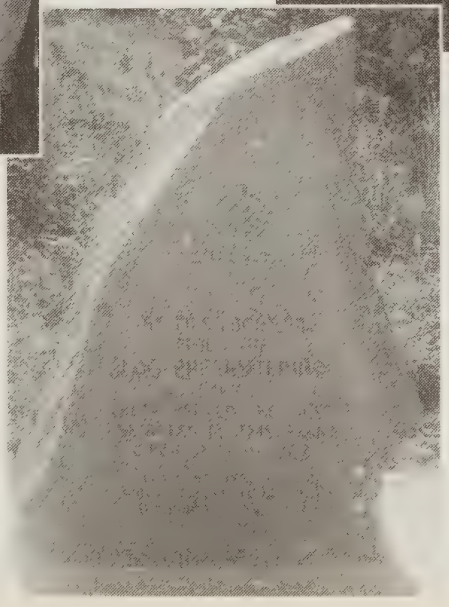
IN RECOGNITION OF the 15th anniversary of his ordination, the congregations of Zion Church, Sunnidale Corners, and Jubilee Church, Stayner, Ont., presented their minister, Rev. Tim Purvis, with a blue stole. Assisting him in cutting the anniversary cake are clerks of session Elaine Steele of Zion Church and Donald McNabb of Jubilee Church.





AFTER 200 TEDDY BEARS and bags were donated to Christian Blind Mission International (CBMI), the knitters of Saanich Peninsula Church, Sidney, B.C., and friends from the community gathered over morning coffee to listen to Chris Tinworth speak about the work of CBMI. He is pictured with Melody McQuitty who co-ordinated the project.

A MONUMENT MARKING the site of the first Presbyterian kirk to serve the settlers of the Upper South River, Lochaber and Loch Katrine districts in Nova Scotia was dedicated on Aug. 19. Built around 1823, the log structure served the surrounding communities until 1869 when two churches were built to serve the growing population. The dedication service was conducted by Lewis MacIntosh, president of the Pictou Presbytery of The United Church of Canada, and Rev. Larry Welch, representing the Pictou Presbytery of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Musical highlights included a Gaelic solo and music played on an antique organ. Competitions were held for families wearing the most authentic mid-1800s Sunday-go-to-meeting clothing and the most attractive hats representing the same era.





AN OLD FAVOURITE, "Amazing Grace," was performed as a musical tribute to the new millennium during the seventh annual Robbie Burns Night sponsored by Knox Zion Church, Carberry, Man. Pictured are Roy Middleton (bagpipes), Mitchel Grobb (violin) and Karen Sagin (vocal and keyboard).



JUNE JOHNSTON, a member of Melville Church, West Hill, Ont., and her granddaughter, Loren Meszaros (who also attends Melville), made an impressive team when they participated in a 10-kilometre walk in support of the Circle of Friends fund-raiser for Rev. Chris Vais who has ALS. Together, they raised $550 in pledges.

THE CONGREGATION OF St. Mark's Church, Charlottetown, has been experiencing rapid growth and has begun a building project to erect a new church. Team ministers Rev. Tom and Rev. Paula Hamilton are shown with 13 of the 20 new members received over the past year.





PICTURED ARE MEMBERS of the young adults group at Knox Church, Toronto, and guest speaker Laura Alary, a ThD candidate at Knox College, on their fall retreat. Several members of the group, including Alex MacLeod, young adult pastor at Knox Church, help co-ordinate ministry and other events with students and recent graduates in downtown Toronto.



THREE MEMBERS OF the youth group at St. Stephen's Church, Ottawa, presented the play *The Tables Turned and the Stone Gets Rolled Away* by Scott Douglas to an enthusiastic congregation. Pedro Ramos (Micah), Laura Brittain (Esther) and Julia Gemmell (Mary) are pictured with director Terry Duncan (second from left).



A POT-LUCK LUNCHEON was held at First Church, New Westminster, B.C., to honour Richard Frotten, a recent graduate of Vancouver School of Theology. Cutting the cake with Richard are his wife, Angela, and their children, David and Kathleen. Richard has since been inducted as minister of Westmount Church, Edmonton.

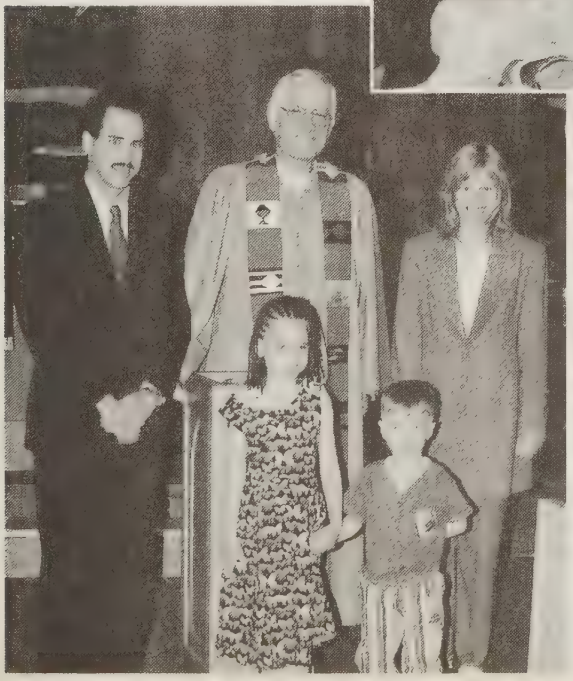


AN ECUMENICAL, bilingual, multicultural gathering of young people between the ages of 15-30 to celebrate the year of Jubilee and the 2000th birthday of Jesus Christ was held at Parc Maisonneuve in Montreal, Sept. 15-17. *Rally 2000* was originally the brainchild of the Roman Catholic community, but an invitation was extended to young people of all Christian traditions. To establish a presence in the enclave of close to 1,200 participants, the Presbyterians taking part brought along a banner with the name of the denomination in French and English, flanked on one side by a Huguenot cross (the Huguenots were the first Protestants in Canada) and, on the other, by the FLAMES logo. The rally included song, dance, theatre, games, information booths and more. It ended with a Jubilee march.



THE CONGREGATION OF St. Andrew's Church, Fredericton, held two anniversary services last year. In May, it celebrated 175 years of Presbyterian presence and work in Fredericton with a banquet and a special service. Rev. Cameron Brett, a former minister of the congregation, was the guest speaker. In June, St. Andrew's celebrated the 75th anniversary of its decision to continue as a Presbyterian congregation. Pictured (L to R) are: Rev. Douglas Blaikie, clerk of session J. Robert Howie, charter member Helen Limerick and organist J. David Berry.

ALL IN THE FAMILY was the theme when Chet, Tania, Rebecca and Selkirk Watmough were baptized at Trinity Church, Victoria. With the Watmoughs is Rev. Brian Crosby.





THE CONGREGATION OF Westminster Church, Ottawa, honoured Rev. MacArthur (Mac) Shields and his wife, Betsy, on his retirement after 12 years as minister. Because Mac and Betsy were heading for a painting holiday in Tuscany, the church hall was decorated with the red, white and green of the Italian flag. The church choir serenaded them with some Italian songs, and everyone joined in singing a musical tribute written especially for the Shieldses. They were presented with an aboriginal carving and a purse of money.

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Three books on church renewal

Reviewed by John Congram

By far, the most radical of the three books is Chuck Meyer's **Dying Church Living God: A Call to Begin Again** *(Northstone, 2000, $21.25)*. The title of the book pretty well says it all: the mainline institutional churches are dying. In fact, Meyer would say many are already dead. It is simply a case of setting a time for the funeral. Their structure and theology make no sense to modern folk. Hope resides in the fact God is still very much alive. The book calls us to work with God in building a completely new church.

Reginald Stackhouse, principal emeritus of Wycliffe College in Toronto, writes more optimistically about the church in his book **Alive Again: Recession and Recovery in the Churches** *(Anglican Book Centre, 1999, $17.95)*. He believes many mainline congregations are recovering and growing, and his book tells the stories of many of them. These cross all denominations. It is no longer possible to talk about the health of denominations but only of congregations. At the end of each chapter, the author offers a summary of principles drawn from his study of churches that are recovering their vitality.

The third book is **Seeking the Seekers: Serving the Hidden Spiritual Quest** by Paul MacLean and Michael Thompson *(Anglican Book Centre, 1999, $17.95)*. Paul MacLean, an Anglican priest, is the executive director of Potentials, a Canadian ecumenical centre for the development of ministry and congregations. Potentials recently completed a study for the Presbytery of East Toronto. Michael Thompson serves St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church in Toronto. Through a study of seekers both within and outside the institutional churches, the authors plot a strategy for mainline churches to respond in a meaningful way to these people. Renewal will not come easily, but the authors believe it is possible for mainline congregations willing to follow the strategies they outline.

Any or all three of these books would serve as helpful resources for congregations wishing to discover renewal.

Reaching for the Invisible God *by Philip Yancey (Zondervan, 2000, $20.75). Reviewed by Zander Dunn.*

Philip Yancey is one of the best writers on religious topics today and proves it again with his latest book. What is most appealing about him is his honesty and candour. He does not duck issues but grapples with the problems we all face and the issues we all wonder about.

Yancey also has the ability to speak to both conservative and liberal Christians. Though he comes from a conservative upbringing, he is not stuck there but has moved past any labels we might try to put on him. His openness and transparency are appealing, and he writes with love. Any Christian would find this book helpful.

Even the format of the book makes it worth buying. If you don't agree with Yancey, you will still find an apt quotation at the beginning of each chapter and a box at the end of each chapter that encloses a pertinent and helpful quotation from some other thinker. Those quotations will get your juices flowing, although I am sure each chapter will also challenge you.

Yancey writes this book out of his hunger for God — his struggle to join with God in a personal relationship. There is plenty of room for doubt. In fact, doubt runs all through the book, prompting question after question. Yancey deals well with all the questions but doesn't try to offer the definitive answer to any of them. He shares what he has learned and points us to That Someone who makes all the difference in his life.

How can we relate to Someone who is invisible, silent and absent? Or does God only seem to be invisible, silent and absent? And if we make a connection, how can such an unequal partnership grow?

What are the stages of growth in our spiritual lives and to what end are we heading? How important is prayer and does it "work"? I know, these are the same old questions that have been raised through the centuries for generations. But this book does not deal with these questions as they were dealt with long ago. The book is designed to prompt us to deal with these old questions in our day and age.

Yancey uses simple language, devoid of theological jargon, and he knows his Bible well. He also tells stories he has read and shares his own experiences. All this combines to make a powerful book — easy to read and definitely worth reading.

Zander Dunn, in retirement, ministers part time at St. Paul's Church, Amherst Island, Ont.

The Best Christian Writing 2000
edited by John Wilson (Harper, 2000, $24.50). Reviewed by John Congram.

This is the first of what the publishers hope will be an annual publication containing some of the best Christian writing from the previous year (in this case, 1999). Philip Yancey contributes the introduction, describing the purpose of such writing as " ... bringing spiritual oxygen to people trapped in airtight boxes" as well as its difficulty in that " ... few people want truth presented, they want propaganda, or public relations."

The 27 articles represent a wide theological spectrum from Harvey Cox's "The Market as God" to Eugene Peterson's "Wise Teachers, Sound Teaching," from Robert Bellah's "Religion and the Shape of National Culture" to Virginia Stem Owens's "What Shall We Do With Mother?"

No Canadian writers are represented. But, for the most part, I found these wide-ranging essays challenging and entertaining. I hope the series continues.

Most books reviewed may be purchased through The Book Room, 50 Wynford Dr., North York, Ont. M3C 1J7. Prices include shipping and handling but not GST. Do not send payment with order. An invoice will follow. Please include name and location of congregation. Toll-free order line: 1-800-619-7301, ext. 301, e-mail: bookroom@presbyterian.ca.

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For more information, write: Renewal Fellowship
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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING: The membership of the Renewal Fellowship within The Presbyterian Church in Canada is called to meet for the Annual Business Meeting on Saturday, March 10, 2001, at St. David's Presbyterian Church, Campbellville, Ontario, at 1:15 p.m. Agendas and reports will be distributed at this meeting. Campbellville is located near Milton, one half-hour west of Toronto, just south of Hwy 401 on the Guelph Line.

Dr. Baxter Kruger, author and theologian, will speak on the theme *"Home"* at the weekend event surrounding the annual meeting. Everyone is welcome.

PLEASE plan to ATTEND!

DEATHS

LISCOMBE, REV. KEVIN STEWART, was the older of two children born to Stewart and Mildred (Bath) Liscombe, April 9, 1956, in Fenelon Falls (via the Lindsay hospital), Ontario. He spent his early years in the Falls, going to school and being groomed to take over the family construction business.

Kevin and Ann Stegenga (high school friends) were married in the Christian Reformed Church. They have four wonderful children: Melissa, Emily, Heather and Aaron.

In 1992, Kevin was confronted by the Lord to consider full-time ministry, and he entered Ontario Bible College/Seminary the following year. An inherited tendency toward nephritis constantly infringed on his health, but he finished the three-year BRE degree and proceeded on to McGill University and The Presbyterian College for his B.Th. and M.Div. degrees.

While attending to his studies, he was student minister to a cluster of four small churches in northern New York state. The people's response to his ministry was outstanding and they were considering the possibility of extending a call to him upon his graduation. However, his condition deteriorated, and he had to depend more and more upon Canadian medical attention. Finally, a compatible replacement kidney was found and implanted half-way through his final year.

Then, with this new lease on life, he was inspired to seek new avenues of service for his Lord and Saviour. Upon graduation, he accepted a call from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Roslin, in the Presbytery of Kingston. His ministry, especially among the youth within and outside the congregation, stirred the hearts and changed the lives of more than a few people

Unknown to him, his last living challenge was his address to the Synod of Toronto and Kingston held in Sault Ste. Marie. His report about ministry to youth received a standing ovation and a commitment to reach out to young people here, there and everywhere with the glorious news of salvation through Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Kevin died of a massive heart attack shortly after his return from synod. He is gone into the near presence of God, but he will never be forgotten.

He had a fervent desire to reach out to young people with the gospel. His life was a living testimony of his ardent love for the Lord. The Roslin congregation has grown substantially in three short years. Three Sundays after his passing, four young couples were received as members and two children were baptized.

St. Andrew's Church, Belleville, was filled to capacity for a triumphant service of witness and praise. The worship was conducted by Rev. Alan Barr, moderator of Kingston presbytery, assisted by Rev. Craig Cribar and the choir under the direction of Rudi Heidjens. Classmates Rev. Job van Hartingsveldt and Rev. John Ufkes, two youth members and Rev. Stan Self also took part. A soul-stirring moment came when David Shepherd, a gifted soloist and dear friend from the United States, sang the Lord's Prayer unaccompanied, as he walked down the aisle to the head of the casket. "For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever. Amen."

McCOMBIE, REV. D. NEIL, was born in Scotland of Scottish parents who gave him the best of Scottish culture and Christian faith. His early years were spent in Toronto where the family was active in Rogers Memorial Church. Neil's father was moved to Midland, Ontario, and it was from Midland that Neil joined the Canadian Army and served overseas in the Second World War. Neil graduated from Waterloo College with his BA and from Knox College in preparation for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. He was ordained in 1956 and served congregations in Cornerbrook, Newfoundland; Ripley-Ashfield, Ontario; Stellarton, Nova Scotia; Port Elgin-Burgoyne, Ontario; and Huntsville, Ontario. Neil was known for his faithfulness to the Scriptures, his strong evangelical preaching and his pastoral concern for people. Neil died at his retirement home in Huntsville on September 21. Services were held in Huntsville and Stellarton. He was laid to rest in New Glasgow beside his parents on his 76th birthday.

ARNOTT, JESSIE, on Oct. 4, 2000. Faithful lifetime member of St. Andrew's, Arthur, Ont. Contributed to the church in many capacities throughout her life — Sunday school, choir, Ladies Guild, WMS and longtime church treasurer. Her life was her witness of Christian love to all whose lives she touched. Survived by husband Warren and children, Debbie, Bonnie, Donna, Ted, Kelley and families.

CALDWELL, JEAN SPENCER-PHILLIPS (Mrs. Tommy), age 82, in Montreal, Nov. 17, 2000; much loved and faithful member, Knox Church, New Carlisle, Que.

COCHRAN, MARY, 88, a quiet, faithful member and active participant with the Presbyterian Women, St. James, Stouffville, Ont., Oct. 20, 2000.

DOUGLAS, JOHN, 86, passed away peacefully on April 13, 2000, with his family at his side. John was born in Glamis, Angus, Scotland, and was a very dedicated and active lifetime member of the Presbyterian Church in both Scotland and Canada. He was an elder for over 60 years in Arbroath Abbey Church, Scotland; St. Andrew's Church in Atikokan, Ontario; and at Lakeview Church in Thunder Bay, Ontario. John is lovingly remembered by his wife, Helen, son Neil (Dianne) Douglas of Regina and daughter Aileen (Jim) Black of Thunder Bay, and their families.

DOUGLAS, MARTIN, age 53, entered into rest on Sept. 30, 2000, after suffering a prolonged illness during which he maintained his strong Christian faith throughout.

Martin was a member of Zion Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, where he unstintingly devoted his time and talents in many areas of the life of the church. His great love was in Christian education where he not only taught the senior church school class but also served as Sunday school superintendent. In 1983, Martin joined the session as an elder and brought his strong Christian beliefs to bear on any matter that was brought forward for discussion.

He leaves to mourn his passing: his wife, Marlene, a member of the choir and who also takes an active part in many aspects of church life; sons Craig, Gordon (Tracie) and Ross; grandchildren Marcus and Martin. He is survived by his parents, two brothers and

The Transitions column welcomes announcements of special events such as births, marriages, anniversaries, graduations, baptisms and the reception of new members, as well as death notices. The rate is $1 per word or $50 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.
All notices of pulpit vacancies, recognitions, ordinations and inductions will be charged to the congregation: $10 for the basic notice and $1 per word for additional information. (There will be no charge to congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.)
Contact the *Record* office regarding all items for the Transitions column.

three sisters, all of whom reside in Northern Ireland. Martin's funeral was held from Zion Church on Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2000.

LEA, HAZEL M. (née BONNELL), peacefully at her late residence on Sept. 2, 2000, in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

Hazel was an active member of Zion Presbyterian Church, Charlottetown. She knew and was known by almost every family in Zion's large congregation, having been involved in all aspects of the life of the church. Hazel taught Sunday school for many years, was a member and president of the Women's Auxiliary, a member and past president of the Margaret MacDougall AMS and an elder for 31 years having been elected in 1969.

Her activity was not limited to participation in the various societies of the church as she spent untold hours visiting members of the congregation in their homes, in hospital or in long-term facilities. She presided over or was involved in the social activities of the congregation including banquets, suppers, family hour and numerous other gatherings. Hazel's interests went beyond her church work as she was an active member of charitable organizations within the community.

She was predeceased by her husband, George R. Lea. She leaves to mourn her passing: a son, Robert, and a daughter, Judy (Cotton), grandchildren and two brothers. Hazel was laid to rest from Zion Presbyterian Church on Sept. 5, 2000.

MacODRUM, FRANCES DICKINSON (née PARLEE), died Oct. 14, 2000. Frances MacOdrum devoted her life to the service of her community and her church. She was raised in Saint John, New Brunswick. She graduated from Acadia University with a BA and from the University of Western Ontario with a MA in chemistry. Until her marriage, she taught school in New Brunswick at Netherwood, Alma College and Saint John High School, and was a church school teacher and CGIT leader at Victoria Street Baptist Church. In 1939, she married the late C. Gordon MacOdrum, QC, MLA (a son of The Rev. Dr. Donald MacOdrum), at that time Mayor of Brockville, Ontario, and moved to Brockville. Her husband died in 1954, leaving her with two young boys, Donald and Bruce, to raise. Shortly after, she also assumed responsibility for Morna MacOdrum, a niece whose parents (Dr. and Mrs. M. M. MacOdrum) had died. She was active in numerous community organizations in Brockville, including the VON and the YM-YWCA. In 1955, she became the first woman school trustee in Brockville and served for six years on the Brockville Public School Board. She was the first woman alderman in Brockville and was a member of Brockville City Council for 14 years. She was the chair of the committee responsible for the building of St. Lawrence Lodge, a municipal home for the aged, and she served on its board, including a period as chair. She was a member of the executive of the Ontario Municipal Association and a member of the Ontario Advisory Council on Senior Citizens. Frances MacOdrum was also an active member of the Progressive Conservative Party, serving terms in various national, provincial and local executive positions. She was active in First Presbyterian Church, Brockville, as an elder, church school teacher, CGIT leader and member of the Women's Missionary Society. She served two six-year terms on the Administrative Council of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. In 1976, she was named Citizen of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Brockville. Recently, she was recognized by the Province of Ontario with a 1999 International Year of Older Persons Award. She was a true servant of our Lord and encouraged her family and those with whom she dealt to show a loving concern for others.

MacRAE, ELMER M., age 93, entered into rest on Oct. 28, 2000, in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. Elmer was a life-long member of Zion Presbyterian Church, Charlottetown. Elmer was an active member in all aspects of church work, having served on the board of trustees and serving on many church-related committees. He was also a member of session for the past 44 years. His quiet demeanour and timely advice were always appropriate to the subject under discussion. In the community, Elmer was not only a successful businessman, he was also a leader in community affairs having served as city councillor for many years and also as mayor of the city of Charlottetown. Elmer was predeceased by his wife, Elizabeth. He is survived by a sister, a son Eric (Mary), a daughter Karen (Ralph), five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. His largely attended funeral was held from Zion Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2000, with Rev. Blaine Dunnett and Rev. Dr. Gordon J. Matheson officiating.

MUNROE, DUNCAN RAE, on June 14, 2000, in his 81st year. Rae resided at Winchester but was formerly from RR 1, Inkerman, Ont. He was born at Moose Creek, Stormont County, Ont.

Rae was a faithful member and elder at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Winchester, Ont. He served with great devotion as clerk of session for 13 years.

He will always be lovingly remembered by relatives, friends, neighbours and the church family of St. Paul's.

SILVERTHORNE, MARGARET, 92nd year, faithful member for 58 years, group member for many years, Alexandra, Brantford, Ont., Nov. 20, 2000.

STEWARDSON, R. DEAN, on Aug. 23, 2000, in

St. Andrew's, Flin Flon

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his 73rd year. Dean was a dedicated, long-time member of Knox Presbyterian Church, Camlachie, Ont., and a faithful member of the board of managers.

WILSON, AGNES, 90th year, faithful member 43 years, Alexandra, Brantford, Ont., Nov. 12, 2000.

INDUCTIONS and RECOGNITIONS

Draffin, Rev. Ruth Y., assistant minister, The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal, Nov. 12, 2000.

Myers, Rev. Paul, West Vancouver Church, West Vancouver, B.C., Nov. 19.

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called to wonder

Written by Jennifer O'Farrell,
St. Mark's Church, Don Mills, Ont.

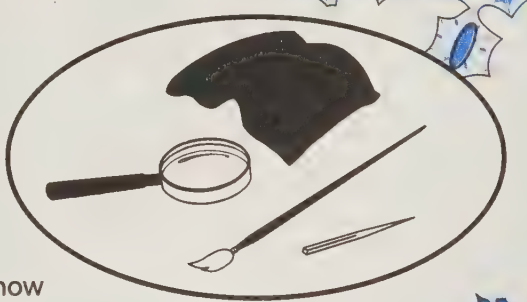
Praise GOD from earth, you sea dragons, you fathomless ocean deeps;
Fire and hail, snow and ice, hurricanes obeying his orders;
Mountains and all hills, apple orchards and cedar forests;
Wild beasts and herds of cattle, snakes, and birds in flight;
Earth's kings and all races, leaders and important people,
Robust men and women in their prime,
and yes, graybeards and little children.

(Psalm 148:7-12, *The Message*)

Have you ever heard that no two snowflakes are alike? Each snowflake is unique.

On the next snowy day, ask everyone at your house to go outside and look at the snow. Ahead of time, gather these items for an outdoor project:

- a piece of dark-coloured fabric (felt or velvet work well) or black paper, placed in a small box or on a plastic tray
- a magnifying glass
- a paintbrush or a toothpick
- hot chocolate for afterwards (optional).



Put the first three items in a garden shed or unheated garage. If your equipment is already cold, you will get a better view of the snow crystals before they melt.

When it starts to snow, catch some snowflakes on your tray. Use the paintbrush (or toothpick) if you need to move the snowflake. It is easiest to hold the magnifying glass near your eye and bring the snowflake on the fabric up toward you.

After you go back inside your warm home, talk about what you observed. Did you notice different shapes and sizes of snowflakes? Describe the shapes you saw.

Link to learning activities about snow online at:
www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html

As you walk along January sidewalks, over fluffy lawns, through lightly dusted parklands and white meadows, praise God for the awesome world God created. Let everyone see your reaction to the beauty of nature. God's very own, old people and little children alike, are called to wonder about God and God's world.

Shirley Weeks

A January story

A troubled mind finds peace and hope in church



She knew in her heart there was nothing more to give. She also knew no one would listen. Yet, everywhere she looked, someone wanted something from her — and they wanted it now! The world was crashing down around her.

She crept away. If they couldn't find her, they couldn't ask. No one was allowed to get near her. The phone rang unanswered. The door went unopened. But the pain in her heart remained like an unwanted guest.

She buried herself deeper. Sometimes it was in a book. Sometimes it was in memories of happier moments, moments when she was still in control. The days drifted by in an anaesthetizing semi-stupor. She began to feel happy again.

Every now and then, she would surface. There were periods when she realized what she had been doing was unhealthy, but she felt helpless to change things. One day, without thinking, she answered the telephone. The caller was concerned: no one had heard from her in such a long time. Was she all right?

She was so astonished someone cared, she talked, and listened, and talked some more. It was an amazing experience. There were no demands being made, only an invitation to come over for coffee. She left the house that day — and on several days to follow. She even had the coffee group at her house.

But the pain was not gone and the anger still lived within her. One day, while flipping through the channels on her TV, she heard someone say, "Take your troubles to God." It was useless advice, really, since she didn't believe there was a God, but the words stayed with her. At coffee that day, someone mentioned going to church. She wondered why anyone would bother in today's world. To find peace and love, she was told — peace and love with which to face the rest of the week. She shook her head in rejecting the idea, but she couldn't shake the words from the TV out of her mind.

The pain was unrelenting and she grew more desperate. Finally, assuring herself it couldn't get worse, she got down on her knees (some memory from childhood telling her she should): "God, if you're there, I've got a problem. I can't live this life anymore. I can't deal with the pain. I'm going nowhere. If you can do a better job, well step right up. I'm in trouble and I need help. I hope you're listening, God. I truly need you."

The next day, her friend called to ask if she would like to join her at church that week. She said yes. It turned out there *was* a certain peace there, maybe even love (it had been a long time since she had felt love so she wasn't sure). Life grew a little better. She didn't hide as much and, when she looked, there were people around her who smiled and held out a hand. Maybe, with a little help, she might make it yet. R

Shirley Weeks is a member of St. Andrew's Church, Warkworth, Ont.



Share the Gifts of a Lifetime.

God blesses each of us in a special way — *some with the gift of compassion, others with wisdom and still others with knowledge or understanding.* Whatever our gifts, it is when we share them that we come to know God's grace more deeply.

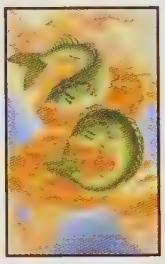
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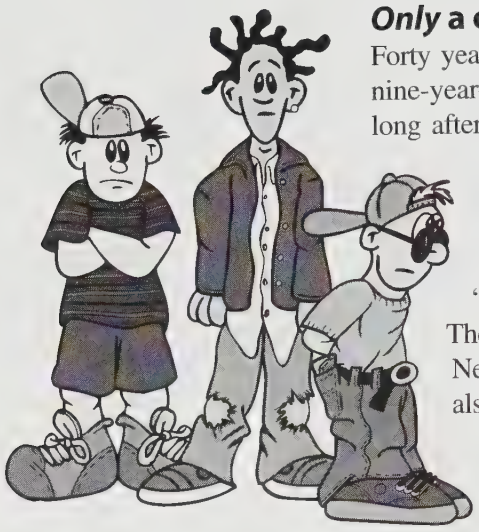


Keeping our health care system afloat

page 14

The living church is always only one fragile generation away from extinction.

— Frank Sellar



Only a child

Forty years ago, a Philadelphia congregation watched as three nine-year-old boys were baptized and joined the church. Not long after, unable to continue with its dwindling membership, the church sold the building and disbanded.

One of those boys was Dr. Tony Campolo, Christian sociologist at Eastern College, Pennsylvania. "Years later, when I was doing research in the archives of our denomination," Tony said, "I decided to look up the church report for the year of my baptism. There was my name, and Dick White's. He's now a missionary. Bert Newman, now a professor of theology at an African seminary, was also there. Then I read the church report for 'my' year:

'It has not been a good year for our church. We have lost 27 members. Three joined and they were *only* children.'"

— from *Teacher Touch*, published by Cook Communications Ministries

Your kind

And congratulations to [Texas State] Rep. Robert Talton, who is sponsoring a bill that would require the state to remove children from the homes of any foster parent who is found to be gay. Talton was apparently unaware that straight people might object to such a bill, so when he sighted a short-haired female minister, wearing her collar and all, waiting in line to lobby him on it, he pointed at her and said, "I don't like you, and I don't like your kind."

The minister, who had come to lobby along with her husband, looked at him in confusion and said, "Presbyterians?"

— from Molly Ivin's column in the Ft. Worth *Star Telegram*

Telling the truth

In my writing I have found that few people want truth presented; they want propaganda or public relations. They want to look good. And the more I strive for accuracy, the greater chance I stand of offending and wounding the people I write about.

— Philip Yancey in *The Best Christian Writing 2000*

We love because ...

We ought to embrace the whole human race without exception in a single feeling of love; here there is no distinction between barbarian and Greek, worthy and unworthy, friend and enemy, since all should be contemplated in God, not in themselves.... Therefore, if we rightly direct our love, we must first turn our eyes not to man, the sight of whom would more often engender hate than love, but to God, who bids us extend to all men the love we bear to [God], that this may be an unchanging principle: whatever the character of the man, we must yet love him because we love God.

— John Calvin, quoted in *Being Presbyterian in the Bible Belt*

Discerning the Spirit

I always dread when I open a letter that begins:

Dear Mr. Bell,

Last night I was given this song by the Holy Spirit.

Please feel free to use it in public worship without requiring a fee or any further permission.

And then I look at the song and think: if the Holy Spirit had given me that last night, I would have handed it back and asked for another one.

— John Bell, from his acceptance speech for the E. H. Johnson Award

Practising generosity

People who follow the biblical example of tithing — that is, giving 10 per cent of their income to the church — say it makes no difference in terms of having some months when finances are a bit tight and other months when they are just fine. Such times come if you tithe or don't tithe. But the difference, they say, is that they start to understand and really feel the generosity of God because they have made it part of their own experience. It sounds strange, but it is true: the people who practise generosity experience profound gratitude.



And the reverse is also true: people who are tight-fisted never experience that joy of gratitude because they never have enough! How can you be grateful and thankful if you are always wanting more?

— Glenn Cooper


John Congram

Leadership is about possibility

Leaders communicate a vision, listen to others and act courageously

My presbytery (East Toronto) has been struggling to remake itself so it will be more effective, especially in providing support and assistance for congregations. Last year, the presbytery hired Potentials, an organization for the development of ministry and congregations headed by an Anglican, Paul MacLean. But, often, the cure is more difficult than the diagnosis. Without effective leadership, all of our tinkering will come to naught.

I thought of this during the nation's mourning over our late prime minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Love him or hate him, the one word writ large across his person and life was leadership. Can Trudeau's leadership style prove instructive?

After his death, people spoke again and again about the vision Trudeau had for Canada as an undivided, compassionate and just society. Leadership is about possibility. To have a grand vision becomes the first requirement of a leader. God's compassionate and righteous kingdom is the church's vision. True leaders have the ability to communicate that vision in a way that enlists others so that it becomes their vision as well.

Some saw Trudeau as an arrogant man. Sometimes he was. But he also had great confidence in his own gifts and abilities. All effective leaders possess this characteristic. Without the confidence that God gives us the necessary gifts to implement the vision, we cannot be leaders either inside or outside the church. We denigrate God when we fail to acknowledge or use the gifts God gives us.

Trudeau's remarkable ability to listen to others impressed me. His sons told of how, from the time they were young, their father would lay out a problem for them (such as whether he should continue in politics) and then ask for their views. Former cabinet ministers spoke of how he gave everyone in the cabinet an almost endless opportunity to share their views to the point where some wished he would cut off discussion and get on with it. Sometimes, we wrongly view leadership in autocratic terms. True leaders always listen intently to the views of others, including (and, perhaps, especially) those with whom they disagree, before acting.

Finally, Trudeau had what I fear we may be losing in the church — nerve or courage. After listening and debating, he had the courage to act. He refused to allow a few naysayers to deter him from doing what he believed to be right. He knew he would sometimes fail and, invariably, he would make mistakes. But that did not lead to paralysis as it so often seems to in the church. He was willing to persist in the face of difficulties and set-backs, never losing a sense of the grand design or vision. The church desperately needs that same greatness of spirit today.

Is leadership a gift or something that can be learned or a combination of the two? I don't know. But I am convinced, if the church is to become a vital force in the 21st century, it must give this much-neglected question of effective leadership more attention

Leadership is not the only attribute needed in the church today but it is one of the most crucial ones.

Keen-eyed readers of the January *Record* may have noticed a change in the masthead. Tom Dickey went from being described as news editor to assistant editor. Giving advertising to an agency resulted in a new job description for Tom who, until then, had looked after the *Record*'s advertising. His new job will entail more writing and going out to gather stories and news. Tom is a talented writer. Look for his byline frequently in future issues.

The February issue brings a 10-year association with columnist Jim Taylor to an end. As someone outside our own denomination, Jim has gently challenged our assumptions and elevated our vision. We will miss his contributions.

In March, we will introduce a new columnist. Sheldon MacKenzie, a retired professor and Presbyterian minister who lives in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, will write under the title "Here and Now." Sheldon will endear himself to you with his wit and remarkable gift as a story-teller.

Finally, along with new writers for the children's page, we have established a link on the *Record*'s Web page (www.presbyterian.ca/record). It will contain additional resources and activities for children on the theme of that month's page. Simply go to our site and click on "Called to wonder." Please have a look yourself and encourage your children, grandchildren and church family to use this added resource.

John Congram



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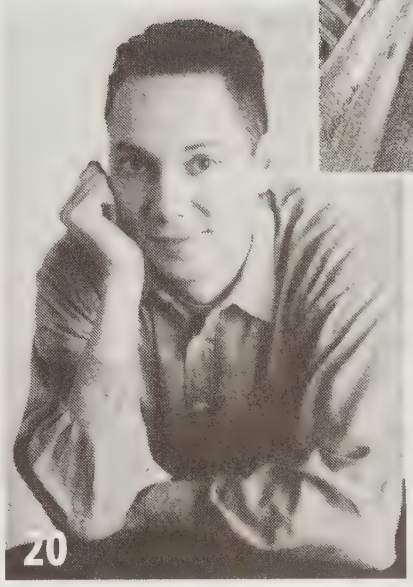
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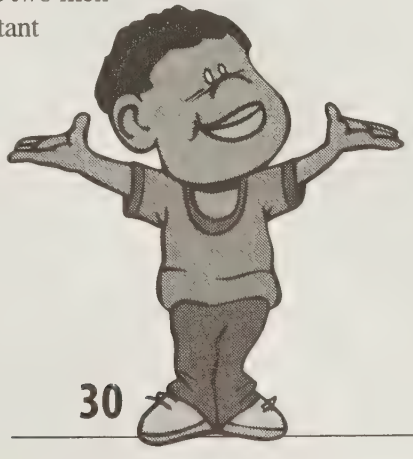
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our cover

Illustration by Lester Clarke

Redemptive Moderator

I've found Glen Davis's columns a wonderful breath of fresh air. He seems to be a thinking Moderator with a lot to say. I enjoy reading him because he writes about more than his moderatorial moving moments.

However, people trained in conducting church services and ministering don't necessarily have political savvy or historical knowledge and understanding. There certainly is no one truth when it comes to history or politics, and I wish the church would stay well away to avoid being tainted or compromised.

Therefore, I was surprised (even after reading about redemptive behaviour at Burnt Church in the November *Record*) to realize Davis seems to favour the Indian-take-all position. He is, of course, welcome to his personal opinion; but that is what it should be — his personal opinion. I don't share it, especially after reading Tom Flanagan's *First Nations Second Thoughts* and Ian Hunter's columns in various media.

We should avoid being patronizing and promoting the patronizing behaviour of the Band Councils toward Indian aboriginal Canadians. And I would hope we do act in a redemptive way — on both sides.

Valerie Smith,
Georgeville, Que.

The Moderator's portrayal of a homeless man at the corner of King and Bay streets (December *Record*) was poignant, but the statement " ... since I have no address, I can't get welfare" is not accurate. Anyone, including a homeless person, who lives in Ontario may be eligible for social assistance if he or she meets all the eligibility criteria. For example, assets are below the maximum level, budgetary needs exceed income and participation requirements are met.

A homeless person who is eligible for social assistance could have a post office box number or use a friend's mailing address for the purpose of receiving written communication. Assistance to a homeless person cannot be refused simply because he or she does not have a conventional dwelling place or a fixed address.

Linda Versteeg,
Toronto

Shorter letters are more likely to be published and less likely to be edited

Editor's error

How incongruous for a lowly scribbler to catch the editor in an error (For the Record, December 2000) with reference to Tamar and Jacob, instead of Tamar and Judah, son of Jacob.

Poor Tamar, who had married a son of Judah, was left widowed and childless. Father-in-law Judah had no more males old enough to help her carry on the lineage. Tamar understood her duty as a Hebrew woman: a member of Judah's family had to assist her to produce a son to keep the begats going. The lucky man was Judah, not Judah's father, Jacob! If Tamar had not "played the whore" with a more than willing Judah and, subsequently, given birth to twin sons, the begats would have ended there.

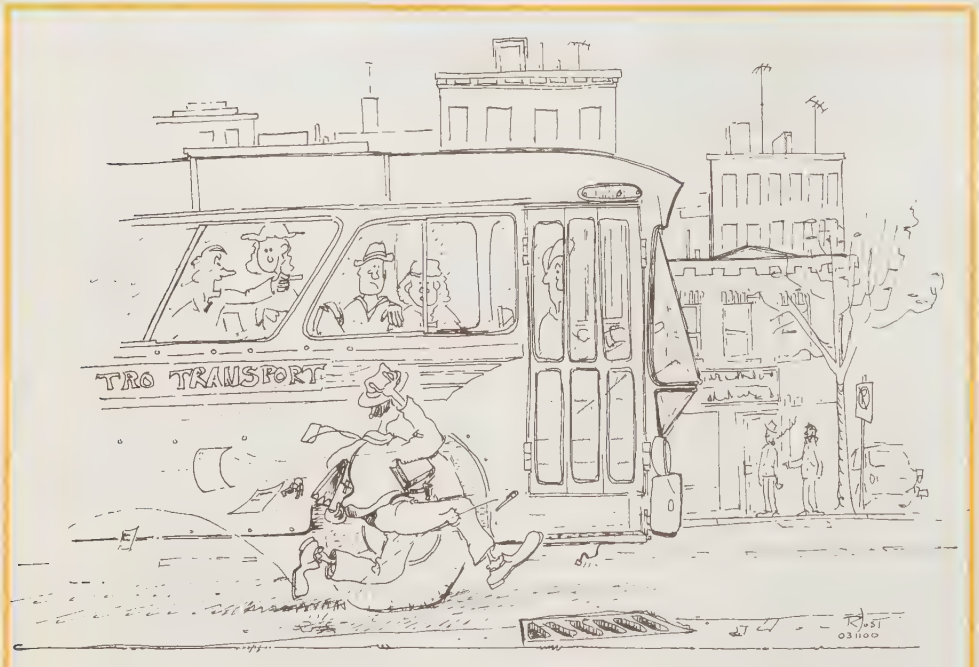
Tamar and Judah and all the rest of the folk could not have realized that their begats would culminate in the best begat of all: the Messiah!

Jean Sonnenfeld,
Toronto

Editor's note: *You and several other keen-eyed observers noticed this error!*

"Apology" in Newfoundland

In the January *Record*, the moderator of the Presbytery of Newfoundland spoke about representatives of the churches who took part in a ceremony of reconciliation with aboriginal people in Newfoundland at the beginning of September. Despite what the press reported, their statement was not an apology; it was a request for forgiveness. There is much to



The Moderator has to *run* to keep up with the AMS!

Editor's note: During the meetings of the Atlantic Mission Society (AMS) in St. John's, the Moderator almost missed the tour bus. Ron Jost created this cartoon which was presented to Glen Davis in appreciation for his participation in the AMS annual meeting.

be forgiven in what European society has done to aboriginal peoples, and a request for forgiveness is well in order. An apology is questionable, for how do we specify what we are apologizing for?

The Presbyterian Church has never had work among the aboriginals of the Atlantic Provinces. In the Maritimes, the Roman Catholics were well-established among the Mi'kmaq before British settlement and, apparently, the Presbyterians did not seek to alter these arrangements. In Newfoundland, the Beothuk were extinct prior to the establishment of Presbyterian congregations, and the Moravians had well-established work among the Inuit of Labrador. At various times, Presbyterians have given support to the Moravians, but we have never interfered.

The Moravian mission was not without its critics, but it maintained a creditable work for more than 200 years. The written form of Inuktitut was entirely the invention of the Moravians, and they should be regarded as the preservers not the destroyers of aboriginal language. The impact of Confederation led to great deterioration in the life of the people, but none of this is attributable to the churches.

We cannot apologize to the Inuit for Presbyterian work among them. There was none. We also ought not to apologize on behalf of the Moravians. Instead, we should give thanks for their work. Similarly, there has been no Presbyterian work among Innu or Mi'kmaq of this province, so there is no church work for which Presbyterians may apologize.

Ian Wishart,
St. John's

Globalization and the churches

In my opinion, both Lloyd Smith and Colin Currie have valid points about globalization and the churches (Letters, November and September *Record*). However, it seems appropriate to point out that Lloyd Smith's last paragraph (other than the borrowing from the International Monetary Fund) applies to Canada as well. That about 25 per cent of all federal income tax (about $28 billion) is needed to pay interest on a $550-billion national debt (roughly four times Canada's annual budget) forces the country to withdraw significant funds from our social programs to pay interest on our loans. It does not only happen to Third World countries. Think of the wealth of social and "aid to other countries" programs we would have had every year for that $28 billion, if only the politicians of the past had been more prudent in balancing budgets. Too bad politicians in the past thought borrowing big money to win elections was more important than fiscal responsibility.

Frank DeVisser,
Hanover, Ont.

Second-class citizens?

The report on sexual orientation at General Assembly in the July/August *Record* leads me to conclude, at least for the present, that the most The Presbyterian Church in Canada can offer its sexual minorities is second-class citizenship. In view of the church's fine record in other civil rights issues, I find this sad and embarrassing.

The *Record* has done an excellent job of raising consciousness of Jesus in its recent series. I suggest it would do the church a great service by publishing a series of articles to encourage intelligent discussion of the divisive issue of sexual orientation.

James Komar,
Saskatoon

Birthday present

My birthday is in February. About a month before my birthday, my husband, Glenn, and son, John, will say, "So, Mom, what would you like for your birthday present this year, and it can't be more fabric!"

This year marks 38 years I've been part of the Presbyterian Church. So I thought I would do something about my own birthday present. I'm writing to the *Presbyterian Record*. In my 38 years, I've seen the Presbyterian Church increase, hold steady and decrease in numbers. I'd like to shout out to all Presbyterians: "Take heart! God is with us always! God will never abandon us!"

Evangel Hall
Summer 2001 Job Opening

Youth Program Consultant

Evangel Hall wishes to hire a qualified university student for summer 2001 to do a research study on the needs of inner-city youth for a Christian-based youth program at the Hall.

The goal of the study will be to recommend programs that (a) meet the highest priority needs of high school-age youth in the Hall's area and (b) fit with our mission to "enable the distressed of Toronto's inner city to achieve their potential through a Christian ministry of service, programs and advocacy designed to nurture self-esteem and human dignity."

In the study, you will:
- identify and define of the needs of youth in our area
- survey other agencies attempting to meet these needs
- assess gaps or overlaps and
- make specific recommendations.

In order to be effective, you must:
- understand and appreciate the goals and work of Christ's church
- be comfortable in an inner-city/ homeless mission setting
- work independently
- communicate well
- move easily about unassisted
- have an e-mail address.

Please mail, fax or e-mail your résumé with a one-page-ONLY statement about why this position interests you. Please do not call the Hall! Only those to be interviewed will be contacted. The deadline is March 29, 2001. Late applications will not be accepted.

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P.O. Box 309, Station B
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Fax: (416) 504-8056
evangel.hall@sympatico.ca

For my 38th birthday present, I would like Presbyterians to write about positive things God is doing in their lives and what they are doing to share the love of Jesus. I'd also like to hear how they overcome discouragement and encourage their minister.

Lorna Ball,
Nanaimo, B.C.

Agreement

I commend James Weir and agree with his letter (November *Record*). The hymns in the 1972 edition of *The Book of Praise* were crafted with care and skill by devout people, are part of the heritage of the church, and had both rhyme and rhythm that have been ruined by modifications.

It is not necessary to be literate to understand the words in the old hymns. People know what "Thee" and "Thine" mean. And because Jesus referred to God as His Heavenly Father, the use of masculine pronouns (capitalized) in referring to God is appropriate.

I hope the editors of future revisions of *The Book of Praise* will show respect for the authors of hymns by not changing the original texts and will also respect the abilities of congregations to understand and enjoy these texts the way they were first written.

Regarding a change in the Apostles' Creed: the construct "he descended to the dead" is sloppy English. "Descend" means to go from one place to a lower one. "Dead," whether an adjective or a singular or plural noun, is not a place. The original wording — "He descended into hell" — is understandable; the current wording is not.

J. C. MacDonald,
Saskatoon

Church and home

Along with thanking Jeffrey Crawford for his encouragement to minister to the youth and children of our congregations (Generation Y@2000, December *Record*), I wish to add a couple of comments.

First, it is also vital to encourage the parents of our children and youth to grow in their commitment to Christ. This is a most important emphasis in our congregations. Youth ministry should never be a substitute for the role of godly parents or grandparents (II Timothy 1:5). The church should complement the ministry of the home.

Second, I attended Canada Youth 2000 last July and was baffled by the absence of challenge for teens to make a profession of faith. There was plenty of reference to our baptism but virtually none to the need for teens to make the vows made by parents at baptism as well as the teaching of both home and church their own. One should not assume children and youth automatically have made such a decision in a local congregation, never mind at a gathering of 600-plus teens. Youth (and adults!), I believe, value and need such challenges. (Question: Does our denomination still emphasize profession of faith for teens?)

Jim Walton,
Richmond, B.C.

Building Global Community
Challenges for the Church in the Third Millennium

The International Affairs Committee of The Presbyterian Church in Canada is hosting two consultations on global issues. The consultations offer opportunities to worship, celebrate, learn and act together on some of the critical issues facing our global community.

The guest resource person for both consultations is Ken Kim, lay mission worker of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Ken is on assignment in Guatemala with the Committee for the Verification of Codes of Conduct (COVERCO). COVERCO is an independent organization in Guatemala that provides independent monitoring and verification of working conditions in the clothing and agricultural export sectors.

Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba

Where: Valleyview Presbyterian Church, 7655-26th Ave. S.W. Calgary, AB.

When: Friday, March 30 (7:00 pm to 9:30 pm) and Saturday, March 31 (9:00 am to 4:00 pm).

For further information, please contact Janette Mackie, (403) 282-3014 or e-mail lmackie@cadvision.com

Atlantic Synod

Where: Camp Geddie, Merigomish, Nova Scotia.

When: Friday, April 20 (7:00 pm to 9:30 pm) and Saturday, April 21 (9:00 am to 4:00 pm).

For further information, please contact Rev. Donald MacKay, (902) 755-3199 or e-mail dwmackay.atspcc@ns.sympatico.ca or Karen Mackay, (902) 925-2784

You may also contact Justice Ministries at (1-800) 619-7301.

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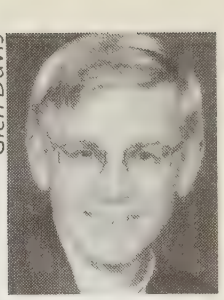
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barley.is@home.com


Glen Davis

Do all witnesses have to speak?

No word strikes more terror into the hearts of good church folk than the word "witnessing"

I've heard it and I've said it myself: "If the church is going to stop declining and start growing, the members of the church have to get out there and be good witnesses." As I have visited churches from east to west and heard the concerns about declining membership and lack of youth in the church, I have been reflecting on this notion of "witnessing."

No word strikes more terror into the hearts of good church folk than the word "witnessing." When the minister gets to the part of the sermon where all the signs point to a lecture on witnessing, many hearers do one of two things: they either have an attack of guilt or they simply tune out and turn off. Nothing seems more difficult to us than telling others about Jesus Christ and what he means to us.

Which raises this question: "All Christians need to be witnesses, but do all witnesses need to speak?"

My mom was a wonderful Christian. She was at worship every Sunday and made sure we were, too. She prayed every morning, on her knees by her bed. Out of her poverty, she gave every dollar she did not need to live on to her church and to those poorer than she was. She baked, knitted, kept minutes and did everything she could for the work of Christ. (What an incredible moment it was for me to find a card, signed by my mother, pinned to the wall in the shack of a poor family in Korea who were supported by Mom's group from Marion Bridge, Cape Breton!)

But I don't think I ever heard Mom speak a word about her faith. I know her faith was deep and real and vital, but she never spoke about it, except once in a while she would say shyly, "We certainly have been blessed."

I maintain that Mom was a wonderful witness who never spoke her faith out loud. And I have been meeting people like that in St. John's, Nanaimo, Kelowna, Sault Ste. Marie, Cookstown, South Monaghan, Toronto and many other places. They witness well to Jesus Christ, but they don't, or can't, speak about him.

Are they incomplete witnesses who simply need to be taught what to say? Or are some witnesses not required to speak?

The late Professor David Hay wrote more than once in this magazine that all Christians are not evangelists and it is unfair to expect them to be. Some have been given that gift and some have not.

But we are all called to be witnesses to the love and grace of Jesus Christ. And that witnessing is done in many ways. Jesus said, "You shall know them by their fruits." That is, we know where people stand and where their loyalties belong by the results of their living.

Henri Nouwen said, "God's spirit manifests itself most convincingly through its fruits: 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control'" (Galatians 5:22).

When I look at that list, I am struck by how descriptive it is of my mom's life. Her life attracted people as she grew in the gifts of the Spirit.

So, perhaps, we should be less concerned about the question "How can I make others believe in Jesus?" and apply ourselves to the question "How can I grow in the gifts of the Spirit?" After all, the Spirit is the one who brings people to faith in Christ.

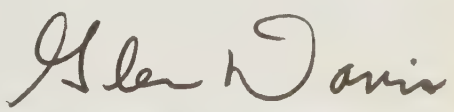
To all those Christians who find it difficult to verbalize their faith, take heart.

A quiet witness can be wonderfully effective

Nevertheless, I do not want people to use these words as an excuse for clamming up when a natural opportunity arises for them to tell what Jesus Christ means in their life. By all means, speak when the Spirit prompts.

But to all those Christians who find it difficult to verbalize their faith, take heart. A quiet witness can be wonderfully effective. Mom's daily practice of the gospel and her prayers by her bedside were the most important factors in my decision to become a minister.

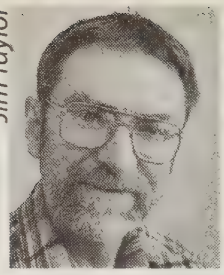
May her tribe increase.



Moderator's itinerary

February 18
Central, Hamilton, Ontario

February 25
Welland Hungarian, Welland, Ontario


Jim Taylor

Revisiting a vanishing world

In these columns, I have tried to express the message of the Bible in contemporary terms

Everything comes to an end. And, so, this is my final column for the *Record*. I'm sorry to be leaving. Ten years is a good long run for a column.

A correspondent wrote to me about my book *Everyday Psalms*, which tried to recast the biblical psalms into modern metaphors. "What we need now," she wrote, "is the same thing for Jesus' parables." I guess she doesn't get the *Record*, because that's mostly what I have been trying to do — expressing the messages of the historic Scriptures in contemporary terms. You see, I'm afraid North American culture is now almost unable to read the Bible without an anthropologist standing by.

I was born in India, back in the dying days of the British Empire. My parents were missionaries. When they came home on furlough in 1947, we all thought we would return to India. But my father was offered a job as principal of a theological college in Canada. So we stayed.

I was 10 when we left India. Ten-year-olds can remember pretty well, but those memories were as unorganized and unconnected as a shoebox full of old snapshots. As I aged, I felt a need to get that shoebox organized and catalogued.

Occasionally, during Bible study groups in Canada, I have wondered why some passages seemed so clear to me but baffled others. After spending a month revisiting my childhood, I understand better. I belong to a small minority in the so-called First World who have seen the kind of world Jesus knew. Others can only read about it; I have known it personally.

In the villages of rural India, for example, farmers still scatter seed by hand over a field that is sometimes plowed deeply, sometimes scratched over rocks, usually bordered by weeds and that has a footpath snaking through it. A woman carries water in a brass pot on her head from the communal well back to her village. A young lad herds his unruly flock — more often goats than sheep, but a flock, nevertheless — across the desert. A woman uses a twig broom to sweep dust off dirt floors and out the front door. And frustrated young sons still run away from their villages, lured by the big and sinful cities. In these settings, I recognize the raw material for most of Jesus' parables. Indeed, for most of the Bible.

I'm afraid North American culture is now almost unable to read the Bible without an anthropologist standing by

Granted, India is not first-century Palestine. The geography, the language, the religion — these are all different. But if Jesus had been miraculously transplanted to rural India during his lifetime, much that he saw would have felt familiar to him. Until industrial machinery arrived, poverty and agriculture wore pretty much the same face in any arid, tropical region.

But our industrialized society has moved so far from that original context that much of the Bible has become meaningless folklore. We have to have the context explained to us. Bible study often becomes a kind of cultural archaeology in which we dig up distant social customs to make sense of the stories. More and more, we depend on experts to supplement our insights with their knowledge.

Ours may be the last generation still able to view this vanishing biblical lifestyle — if only through a bus window. Technical innovations are changing rural patterns. Even in India, most farmers have already switched to tractors, gang-plows and mechanical seeders. Villagers use cellphones and motor scooters. We are losing for ever the social context that shaped the human interactions in the Bible. Soon, only those who have studied history will be able to fill in the blanks.

And, so, more and more people will simply ignore the Bible. It no longer makes sense to them. Others will turn the Bible into a repair manual. They'll expect it to provide answers, even if those answers don't make sense. Either way, the Bible becomes irrelevant to modern life.

Because of my faith in God, and my conviction that Jesus Christ is the revelation of God, I don't want that to happen. That's why I have spent the past 30 years in a variety of media (including this column) trying to make biblical messages meaningful for people who find the biblical world alien to their daily experience.

By the way, if you want to keep reading my writings, you can still get them on the Internet twice a week. On the Wood Lake Books Web site, www.Joinhands.com, click on "Jim Taylor's site." If you like what you read, you can have the columns delivered by e-mail.

Thanks for the opportunity. And, as Red Skelton would say, "God bless ... " R

Jim Taylor is a writer, editor and co-founder of Wood Lake Books.

Frank Breisch

Holy Hilarity Sunday

A way to bring a little holy madness into Presbyterian order

In the June 2000 issue of the *Record*, the editor quoted Zorba the Greek: "You have everything. Except one thing. *Madness*. A man needs some of this madness or else … or else he never dares cut the rope and be free." I think Presbyterians could use a little Zorbanian madness, too. My suggestion? Celebrate Holy Hilarity Sunday.

What, you ask, is Holy Hilarity Sunday? Let me provide some background.

A friend of mine, a physician who has since succumbed to leukaemia, believed humour is an important part of healing. He introduced me to The Fellowship of Merry Christians, a group with headquarters in Portage, Michigan, and to their newsletter, *The Joyful Noiseletter*. Through the group, I learned about Holy Hilarity Sunday.



Dort Breisch, in a blue wig, stands behind the pulpit at the *back* of the sanctuary at Centennial Church in Calgary.

The background, as I understand it, lies in a tradition of the Orthodox Church. On Easter Sunday, the priest's homily consists of one joke after another. The purpose of such a strange homily is to call attention to the great joke of our faith: the empty tomb. The essence of jokes is that they suddenly take a turn and lead us in a direction we weren't expecting. Well, on Good Friday, it looked as if the forces of evil had won; but the resurrection of Jesus was God's surprise that turned a tragedy into a comedy. Easter was a big joke on the devil, if you will! God has a way of fulfilling his promises in ways that are totally unexpected, and the unexpected is at the heart of humour.

The Fellowship of Merry Christians suggests we celebrate Orthodox Easter, the Sunday after the western Easter, as Holy Hilarity Sunday. That struck me as a great idea. Let me tell you what happened in Centennial Presbyterian Church in Calgary when I was interim minister.

When I first arrived, Centennial was, for various reasons, an anxious congregation. Misunderstandings and conflict had caused many to leave the congregation and they were without a pastor. There were many legitimate concerns. I pointed out, through a systemic review of the congregation I had done, that anxiety itself was a major problem. The session and congregation agreed, and we consciously worked to reduce the anxiety level within the congregation.

Humour is a great anxiety-buster, so I told the worship committee I thought we should celebrate Holy Hilarity Sunday. After I explained it, the committee agreed. So, during Lent of 1999, I began announcing that the Sunday after Easter would be Holy Hilarity Sunday. People found the title intriguing and began to wonder what was going to happen.

On the Sunday after Easter, attendance was high. (Many Presbyterians refer to that Sunday as "Low Sunday," so that in itself was amusing!) At the beginning of the service, instead of going to the pulpit, I stood in front of the front pew and told five or six jokes in a row. Believe me, I had worked on those jokes, both choosing them and rehearsing them so that I didn't forget any punch lines! Then, we began the service. When children's time rolled around, I shared "Knock, knock" jokes with the children and also included a few funny stories in the sermon. Everyone enjoyed it. It was a positive step in Centennial's journey to lightness.

Last Easter, people were expecting the Sunday after Easter to be Holy Hilarity Sunday. On Easter Sunday, when I said, "And next Sunday is?" I received a

loud response: "Holy Hilarity Sunday!" They were ready for it … more ready than I knew.

The next Sunday morning, my wife, who is a clown by nature, decided to wear her blue wig to church! If I worried about that, I needn't have! When we walked into the narthex, the first thing I saw inside the sanctuary doors was the back of the pulpit! It reminded me of an old cartoon I saw of a church with a banner celebrating the opening of the new building. Looking from the rear of the sanctuary you saw the faces of the congregation, while the pastor in the pulpit was on the telephone saying, "Get me the building contractor!"

Unfortunately, there was no mike connection in the rear, so I couldn't go along with it and lead the service from the back; we had to put a lectern in the chancel. At the beginning of worship services, an elder brings in the Bible, and the people stand and remain standing while the choir and minister enter. I came in, went to the front and told them to sit down. People looked at each other and sat down. Then I began as I always do: "Good morning!"

The entire congregation jumped up and shouted "Hallelujah!" I knew they were into Holy Hilarity Sunday! And that was only the beginning of a wonderful, wacky service! And, frankly, I think God enjoyed the worship we brought that morning.

So let me suggest Holy Hilarity Sunday to you as one way to bring a little holy madness into our Presbyterian order. My way of doing it may not be yours. That's OK. But let's give God credit for a sense of humour. Let's celebrate God's love for the unexpected. Let's not be like the Pharisees who couldn't get the point when God's Messiah turned out to be someone like Jesus of Nazareth! The Easter season is a time for celebration, and humour can increase the joy of any celebration. Happy Holy Hilarity Sunday to you! R

Contact the Fellowship of Merry Christians at: PO Box 895, Portage, MI 49081-0895, at http://www.joyfulnoiseletter.com or by e-mail at JoyfulNZ@aol.com.

Frank Breisch is a retired Presbyterian minister who serves as a chaplain with Hospice Calgary.

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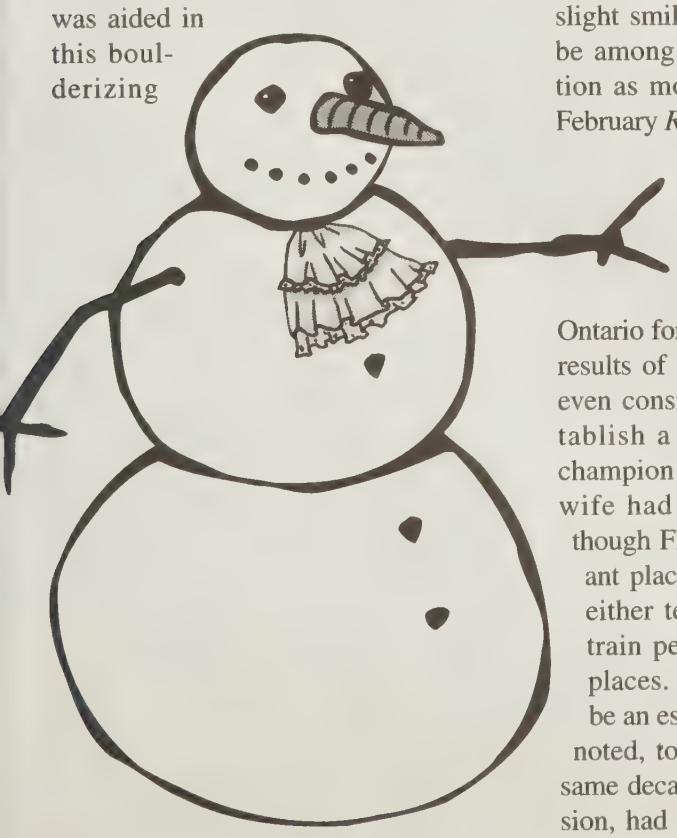
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pastoral epistles from peter plymley II

My dear editor:

J. Paddyngton Bayer has never been inclined to make resolutions at the New Year, preferring *ad hoc* adjustments to his well-polished persona. But he made an exception for the beginning of the Third Millennium. (He tried not to be tiresome about it, but he thought being able to count was essential to good citizenship and a wholesome Christian life.) For him, the grand change was ushered in *this* January. And with it, his resolve never to covet his neighbour's Assembly, General, Moderator of, nomination.

His congregation at St. George, North-Park, was somewhat nonplussed by the frequency of texts and sermons from the book of Ecclesiastes — not usual Advent/Christmas fare. J.P. had never been known as a preacher much given to the Old Testament. As he confided to his most trusted associates, he considered it dangerous to "poke around among the ancients" and found some of the Hebrew Scriptures to be of questionable taste and insufficient delicacy. He managed to tolerate the responsive psalm each Sunday, being careful to omit "the violent and judgmental bits." Happily, he was aided in this boulderizing business by the lectionary (the only useful function he found for it). If it made the verses look like a lottery number (e.g., 1-3, 4-9, 18 & 21), it was a small price to pay to sustain the genteel mood.



He discovered Ecclesiastes when it was an answer in a crossword puzzle. He wasn't sure of the spelling so checked the table of contents in his Bible for the page reference. He forgave himself for his ignorance of its whereabouts. It was stuck between the pedantic Book of Proverbs and the salacious Song of Solomon. When his eye fell upon the opening words, he could have sworn he heard the humming of heavenly hosts. (That it was his wife singing in the shower made no difference.)

> *J. Paddyngton Bayer resolves never to covet his neighbour's Assembly, General, Moderator of, nomination*

His usual seasonal gloom had been upon him. Once again, his carefully worded promise to assume the mantle of Moses, surmounted by the photo of his wise and genial face (with the barest hint of paternal long-suffering in the slight smile) would not ... would NOT be among those exposed for examination as moderatorial candidates in the February *Record*!

He had tried, oh how he had tried, to crown his career with this last elevation. Noting no Moderator had come from west of Ontario for 10 years, and considering the results of the recent federal election, he even considered a move. He would establish a new power base there and champion western indignation. But his wife had gently reminded him that, though Flin Flon was no doubt a pleasant place, he was hardly equipped by either temperament or experience to train people for ministry in isolated places. (J.P. considered Starbucks to be an essential sign of civilization.) He noted, too, that half the crop over the same decade, and the last five in succession, had attained what others spoke of as "a national profile" by dint of having served in either church offices or one of the colleges.

A few phone calls established there were few positions to which he could aspire at church offices, given that his skills could not be displayed to full advantage in the PC-Pak. Most of the incumbents were younger (he noticed the same trend in other professions) and shockingly unaware of his past contributions to the dignity of the denomination. Not that dignity carried much weight these days. He had contributed to each of the colleges like a good corporate donor at election time, but they hadn't even offered one loathsome student to him to supervise, much less a seat on a senate.

To his funk and barely repressed fury came the words of one of his own kind: "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities ... all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?" He flipped the onion-skin pages of his *King James* and, in the space of a week, he had read all 12 chapters. Balm! Deliverance!

He began to exude a spirit of benign resignation. The prospect of the annual congregational meeting worried him not a whit. His wife was worried. It was late for a mid-life crisis. But she knew the change was real after a huge mid-December snowfall. The neighbour's children had made a snowman. Returning home from Ladies Guild one afternoon, she thought there was something odd about it (the snowman, not the meeting — which was always odd). Stepping closer, she saw gathered around its stubby neck some slightly yellowing moderatorial lace.

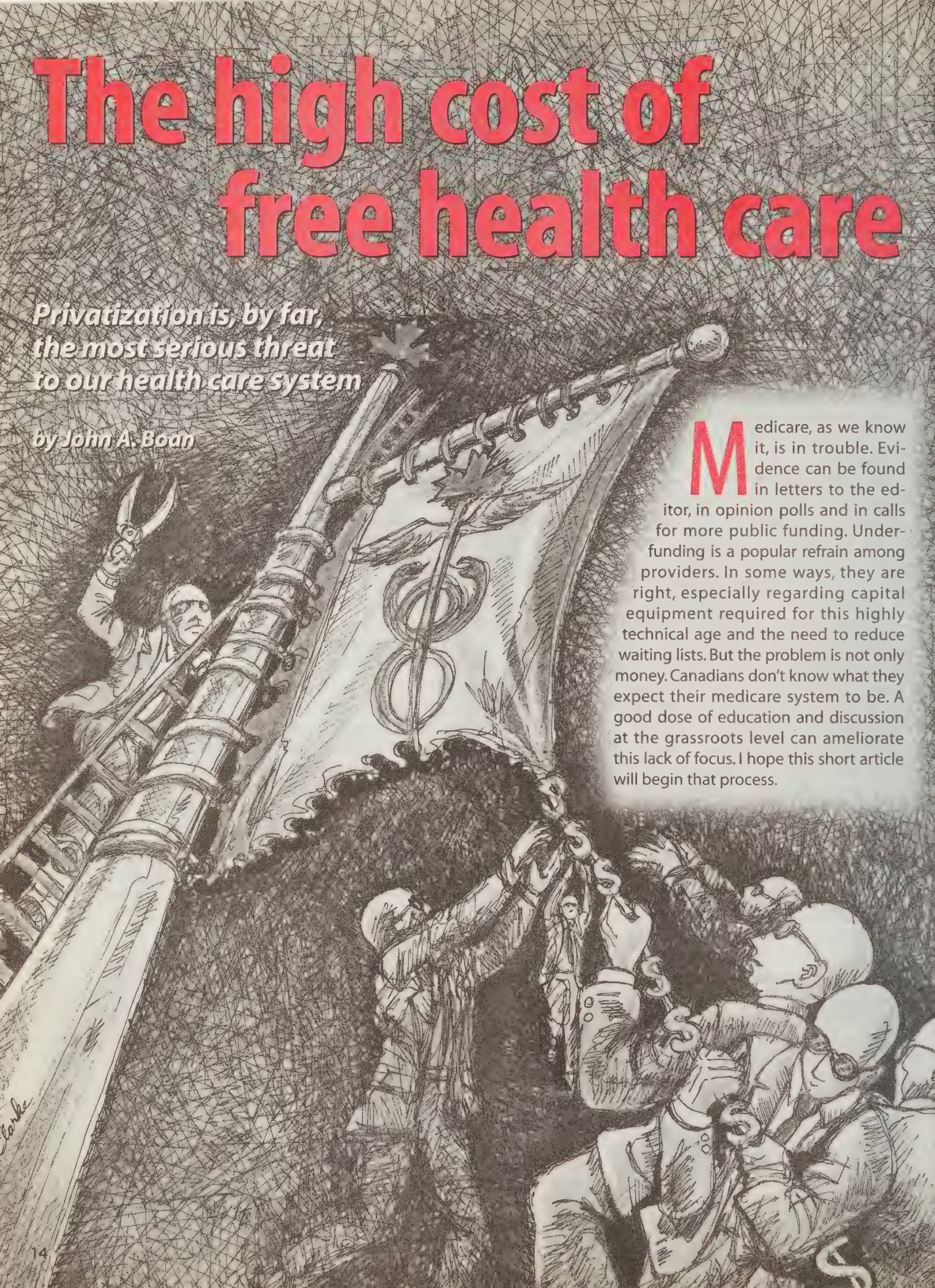
Yours ecclesiastically,

Peter Plymley II

The high cost of free health care

Privatization is, by far, the most serious threat to our health care system

by John A. Boan



Medicare, as we know it, is in trouble. Evidence can be found in letters to the editor, in opinion polls and in calls for more public funding. Underfunding is a popular refrain among providers. In some ways, they are right, especially regarding capital equipment required for this highly technical age and the need to reduce waiting lists. But the problem is not only money. Canadians don't know what they expect their medicare system to be. A good dose of education and discussion at the grassroots level can ameliorate this lack of focus. I hope this short article will begin that process.

I have studied our health care system for nearly 40 years. My interest in the economics of health care began in 1961 when I was seconded to the research staff of the Royal Commission on Health Services, chaired by the late Justice Emmett Hall. Then, in the economics department of the University of Regina, I taught and did research in the area. Despite this experience, I regret to say I come with no panacea.

The idea of national health insurance for Canada has been around for a long time. It was a plank in the platform of the Liberal Party in 1919. But because the Constitution gives the responsibility for health to the provinces, the federal government has not been able to move on health unilaterally. No agreement had been reached by the time the CCF came to power in Saskatchewan. On January 1, 1947, T. C. Douglas brought in the first universal hospital insurance program in North America, and things began to move nationally. Successive acts at the national level, consolidated in the Canada Health Act (1984), ushered in what we call medicare. At every stage, some said we couldn't afford it, overlooking the fact that, since medical and hospital bills were being paid, *we were already "affording it"* in a limited way. What was being suggested was universal coverage as a right.

From the time universal hospital insurance came into effect, costs rose rapidly everywhere. In the United States, the proportion of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) attributed to *personal health care* (everything that is spent on health from aspirins to open-heart surgery) rose from about six per cent to around 14 per cent of the GDP. In Canada, the increase was slower but, nevertheless, it currently runs at about 9.5 per cent of GDP. The difference is attributed to many factors, lower administrative costs being an important one. Make no mistake, health care is expensive. In current dollars, expenditures grew from $12.2 billion in 1975 to an estimated $86 billion in 1999. In real terms, allowing for inflation, the increase has not been alarming but is significant. Only about two-thirds of personal health costs is funded publicly. The balance — dentistry, drugs and so on — is provided by the private sector.

According to the *Interim Report of the Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Health (June 2000)*, health costs are likely to grow at the rate of nearly five per cent annually in the foreseeable future. If this rate is realized, we can expect total health expenditures to be in the neighbourhood of $380 billion by 2031, when most of the baby boomers will have reached the age of 65. Fortunately, with increases in GDP, the share of the latter will likely go up somewhat, but not anything like what is predicted for the United States where, by 2025, the share of the GDP may be as high as 25 per cent. I mention this possibly large future expenditure to emphasize the need to take steps to understand the issues better.

Let's get some things straight. First, there is no country in the world with enough resources to provide unrestricted health services. The number of things modern medicine is able to do to enhance life increases daily. A decision has to be made as to what gets done and what can simply not be afforded. This is something that has to be recognized by every country, no matter how rich. There is simply is no "widow's cruse" (I Kings 17) as much as people might wish there were. The question that needs debate is, how much of the GDP *should* we be spending? When people say health is too important to put it in monetary terms, it needs to be said that every cent spent on health care is a penny that is not available for a new car, better roads, the down payment on a new house or whatever.

Second, Canada has a *health insurance* scheme to cover the individual's costs for care, not socialized medicine. If it were the latter, all of health care would be covered, including such things as dentistry. Some people may think this is splitting hairs but, as long as people are hoodwinked into believing we have socialized medicine, the attitude toward problems will be different than if they realize it is a universal insurance plan. How many times did I hear Justice Hall say, "What we need is a prepayment plan, so when one needs hospital or medical care, a fund will be there to pay for it"? He was convinced by the evidence before him that the only way to achieve it and have it include everyone is to have it done as a public service.

I saw a startling highway sign in Ohio. In most jurisdictions, such signs say, "Buckle up. It's the law," or variations on that theme. This one said, "Buckle up! It's *our* law" (italics added). It is all too easy to forget that they are *our* highways, it is *our* government, it is *our* health care system. Canada's universal health care scheme is probably the greatest test of participatory democracy we have ever had. We were fortunate enough to get it at a peculiar juncture in history. Ten years earlier, it would not have been possible because our government leaders would have thought we couldn't afford it. Ten years later, absolutely impossible because, by that time, financial interests would have become powerful enough to have lobbied against it successfully, as they have in the United States. People need to be reminded of that, and think long and hard before they allow it to be compromised — for ever.

Anyone with grade school math knows there are only so many doctors and nurses, and only so much money, so

how would paying privately free anything up?

Facts about medical care

A majority of Canadians support medicare.

- Should individuals be allowed to pay to get better care? (Ekos Research)
  1966: 34% agreed, 55% disagreed
  1999: 25% agreed, 61% disagreed
- May 2000, 93% of respondents (Ekos Research) favoured national standards in health care.
- Canada ranks 19 out of 22 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries in terms of public expenditures expressed as a percentage of total health expenditures. Canada ranks only above Australia, Portugal and the United States.

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Third, the most serious threat to our health care system comes wearing sheep's clothing and a big smile. There are individuals and organizations that stand to gain a lot by privatizing health care, and they are busy working to bring it about. Privatization is the most serious threat to our health care system by far. It is offered as a final solution to all of the worrisome economic problems associated with the provision of health care. The uncomfortable fact that it doesn't work particularly well in the United States, where some 45 million people have no health insurance or are inadequately covered, does not deter them. Big companies, looking at the $380-billion a year expenditure on personal health care coming up, would like a "piece of the action." Reasonably wealthy individuals, who are used to having whatever they want, call out for "free choice" in health care, based on the cash nexus. They call for a system where services are provided privately parallel to the public system. They say that such facilities would free up resources for the public system. But anyone with grade school math knows there are only so many doctors and nurses, and only so much money, so how would paying privately free anything up? Those who say the perceived underfunding of the public system would be relieved if private funding were brought into it have simply not done the math. Aside from the limited number of personnel alluded to above, if the public system is underfunded, the way to cure it is to fund it properly (always having in mind those roads that need fixing and the desire to reduce taxes).

The church's long history from medieval times in providing health care needs to be revisited. Justice Ministries has been working on it.

Canadians need to tell their political representatives what they expect in the way of health services. A case could be made for revisiting the Canada Health Act with the objective of amending it so that it will authorize more appropriate services. At present, it is restricted pretty well to hospital and medical services. One might ask why services to the sick are divided up among home care, long-term care and the hospital? Shouldn't there be one seamless garment for all services needed, from intensive care to home care, funded under the Canada Health Act under the supervision of medical authorities? Likewise, why should the hospital patient have to find a private source for the drugs that were dispensed by the hospital just because s/he is well enough to be discharged? Why couldn't the prescription continue to be supplied by the hospital as long as needed while a comprehensive "pharmacare" solution is being worked out? These and other questions will come to mind once citizens begin to play a larger role in making the decisions concerning the delivery of their health care. If democracy can't be made to work when something as serious as health care is at stake, we are in deeper trouble than I thought. R

People need to think long and hard before they allow our health care system to be compromised — for ever

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John A. Boan is professor emeritus, University of Regina, and a corresponding member of the Justice Ministries advisory committee.

Resources for further study

The Acts and Proceedings of the 124th General Assembly (June 1998), pp. 398-415

The Acts and Proceedings of the 125th General Assembly (June 1999), pp. 324-325

The Acts and Proceedings of the 126th General Assembly (June 2000), pp. 332-333.

Caring for Profit by Colleen Fuller, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 1998.

For numerical data, consult Canadian Institute for Health Education: www.cihi.ca/facts/nhex/attach4.htm

Do We Care? Renewing Canada's Commitment to Health edited by Margaret A. Somerville, McGill-Queens, 1999.

Clear Answers: The Economics and Politics of For-Profit Medicine by Kevin Taft & Gillian Steward, The University of Alberta Press, 2000.



How churches relate film to faith during Montreal's film festival

In Montreal, as the summer days begin to grow shorter and there is the hint of fall in the air, movies arrive in abundance at the Montreal World Film Festival. Each day for 10 days, beginning in late August, movies run on seven screens from nine in the morning until past midnight at the Cinema Parisien. Other theatres are a few blocks away — all offering more than 400 films from which to choose to the intrepid moviegoer. Most of these films will never be shown in commercial theatres in North America, though some will eventually reach theatres that show "art" movies, and a few will be introduced into mainstream shopping mall multiplexes that have become the major venue of the modern movie industry.

Across the street from the Cinema Parisien is one of Montreal's oldest Protestant churches. St. James, originally Methodist, is now part of The United Church of Canada. A short walk from all those movie screens, the church is the location of the annual Talk Faith/Talk Film forum which has added an important religious dimension to one of the world's major film festivals.

Organized by Interfilm, North America, and directed by Canadian Presbyterian minister Andrew Johnston, the Talk Faith/Talk Film forum is an intense weekend of film-viewing and discussion. Two festival films each morning, Saturday through Monday, followed by conversation and sandwiches at St. James until the early afternoon when participants head off to sample either the sights of Montreal or more films.

This late-summer weekend forum, which merges faith to film, has been held since 1997 and will be offered again in 2001. Participants are invited to register for the forum. They come to Montreal by both word of mouth (from past participants) and through ads in the church press. Participants share a common love for film and a desire to develop their own interpretive skills in relating film to faith. Those who have attended previous forums, both clergy and laypeople, find they are part of a fast-growing community of film enthusiasts who have developed a taste for film art and a desire to sharpen their critical cinematic skills.

To assure full involvement for all the discussants, the forum limits enrolment to fewer than 20. In 2000, 18 were in the group, six Canadians from the Anglican, Presbyterian and United churches. The rest were from the United States. Altogether, the group included eight clergy and 10 laypeople.

Interfilm, North America, the organization that sponsors the forum in partnership with local Montreal church leaders, is part of an international network of church people who relate faith to film. The program began in Europe in the 1970s, among European Protestant leaders who were looking for ways to connect their religious institutions to the highly secular post-war culture. Movies were a natural bridge, especially among young people who were beginning to detect a growing sense of the transcendent in the work of many European film directors.

Church officials who directed film offices in the various state churches of Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and France entered into this dialogue on two fronts: first, by organizing seminars on religion and film with the initial support of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and, then, by forming ecumenical film juries at a large number of European festivals.

John Taylor, an American photographer who worked on the staff of the WCC, looked for ways to relate this European film and faith phenomenon to North American churches. But he found a greater resistance, related, perhaps, to the American church emphasis on producing religious films rather than on looking for religious resonance in secular films. Thus, while European churches were creating opportunities for dialogue about and with secular films, North American church communication personnel focused on producing in-church products for educational purposes. Thus,

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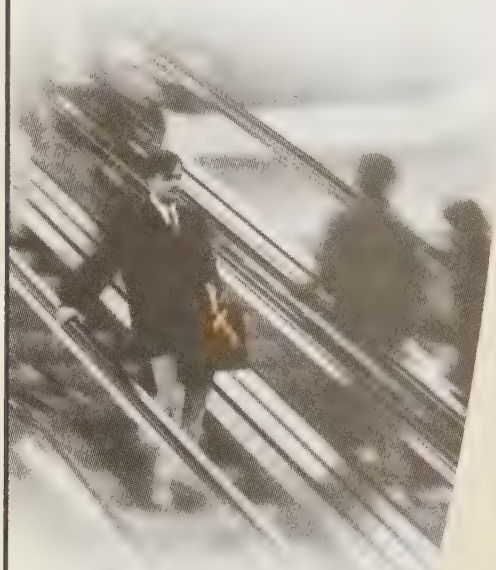
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film as art was largely ignored by North American church leaders who preferred to devote their resources to utilizing film for religious education.

John Taylor invited a few of us in the United States to serve as members of juries in Europe. We join with the Interfilm program there to honour films that are consistent with the Christian faith. Interfilm's focus is on dialogue: informing the church public about important films that resonate with Christian tradition and faith, and demonstrating to the film artists who make these films that the religious community is receptive to their work.

My first assignment as a jury member at a secular festival was at Montreal in 1980. I was one of three Protestant jury members who worked with three Roman Catholic members to identify what was for us the outstanding film at the festival and honour that film in a presentation at the close of the festival. There have been ecumenical juries at Montreal each year since. I have also served as a jury member at the Berlin festival, and other North American jury members have also been invited to both Berlin and Cannes.

It was the success of the jury program at Montreal that led to the decision to create the Talk Film/Talk Faith forum. Andrew Johnston, a minister in Montreal at the time — he has since been called to St. Andrew's Church in Ottawa — served from the beginning as the Montreal co-ordinator for the jury program. It was under his leadership that the forum was created as a natural outgrowth from the jury program. He correctly assumed that if the juries were going to honour a film each year, it was important to surround that decision with an informed clergy and lay community that could interpret the reasoning behind the award to the larger church community.

As president of Interfilm, North America, I have participated in the seminars by giving a keynote address each year on the subject of religion and film as an art-form. I have also been a leader in some of the discussions. The organizing and logistical planning for the forum has been in the hands of Johnston and his local committee, which includes Moira Barclay-Fernie, clerk of the Presbytery of Montreal, and Ian Fraser, minister of St. Columba by the Lake in Pointe Claire, Quebec.

The goal of the Interfilm North American Montreal program has been, and will continue to be, to explore the ways in which secular film artists grapple with the same issues that confront people of religious faith and to develop interpretive skills to see how film artists work in dealing with that same confrontation. Then, armed with this understanding, forum participants are in a better position to serve as critics of the shallowness of much movie product and to recognize and praise those works that may properly be identified as works of cinematic art.

Already, one of the graduates of the forum has begun a similar program at the St. Louis Missouri Film Festival and, last October, a local St. Louis religious committee held its first forum in connection with that festival. I know of workshops and seminars held at other festivals, including the Denver film festival and, most recently, at the Los Angeles City of Angels festival.

Not all of these festivals have juries, but those that do are organized as ecumenical juries, including Roman Catholic and Protestant members. One of the highlights of the Montreal forum is the commissioning of the six-member ecumenical jury as they begin their work. A service of dedication is held to bless the jury members. Its work: attending 20 or more films over a 10-day period and extensive discussions to determine the award-winning film.



The ecumenical jury of the Montreal World Film Festival 2000 presented its prize to a Moroccan film, *Ali Zaoua*, represented by one of its actors (in the hat). The members of the jury (L to R): Pradip Thomas (India, World Association for Christian Communication), Paula Matabane (Howard University, Washington, DC), Michel Campbell (Faculty of Theology, Université de Montréal), Nicolas Sihol (Paris journalist), Andrew Johnston (minister of St. Andrew's Church, Ottawa).

Not every film will give answers but every film can raise the important questions

In jury work and in the forum, we do not look for "religious" films in any explicit sense. Rather, we identify works of film art that resonate with faith issues and faith questions. Sometimes, the film will be one that explores a human struggle of faith or confronts a moral question. At other times, the film might probe beneath the surface of a social issue. Or, as Polish film director Kryzstof Kieslowski once observed, not every film will give answers but every film can raise the important questions.

The winner of the Montreal jury award in 2000 was a "hard to watch" but important portrayal of street children in Casablanca, *Ali Zaoua*. One of the professional actors in the film was in Montreal where he received the ecumenical jury award. He reported that one of the challenges of that particular film was to work with real streetkids who lived, as he put it, "by their own schedules and routines and would often disappear for days at a time," making film continuity difficult for the director.

Ali Zaoua is not the sort of film that expects to get a North American distributor, but it has now been seen by an appreciative audience in Montreal, including participants in the Talk Film/Talk Faith forum, and has been honoured by the Montreal ecumenical film jury. Those who saw the film have a deeper awareness of the problem of homelessness and its impact on children.

When we began the jury work in Montreal, today's instant communication system of e-mail and the Internet had not been developed. In recent years, these technological developments have been enormously valuable in connecting our network of film forum participants and church people with a deep sense of appreciation for film as art. Already, we have been able to recruit earlier members of the forum to return as jury members, and we are working to connect further with members of the Roman Catholic film community who have their own Internet connection, festival jury work and a strong tie to their European film offices.

When I began working with religion and film, first as a film critic for a United Methodist magazine and then as a teacher of religion and film at the Claremont School of Theology, in Claremont, California, I would often attend screenings with a Chicago Roman Catholic priest. One day, after we had seen a particularly powerful film that had a vision consistent with the Christian tradition, he commented that our film ecumenical connection was a stronger religious bond than our doctrinal differences.

That was a prophetic observation. Recently, I have been engaged in an intensive e-mail conversation with a nun I met at the Los Angeles City of Angels festival, and who shares my love for John Ford's classic *The Searchers*. It is this sort of dialogue that has developed around programs such as the Montreal Talk Faith/Talk Film forums. And it is this dialogue that will enrich our common faith tradition through the motion picture as an art-form. R

James M. Wall is senior contributing editor of *Christian Century* magazine.

Creating a social epidemic

An interview with Malcolm Gladwell, best-selling author and writer for The New Yorker *magazine*

Malcolm Gladwell was born and brought up in Elmira, Ontario, where he attended Gale Presbyterian Church. His parents still serve as elders there. When he graduated in English and history from the University of Toronto, he was unable to find a job in Canada and, so, for a brief period, he worked for a small magazine in Indiana. From there he went to the *Washington Post* for nine years, serving first as its business editor and later as science editor. During his time as science editor, he became intrigued by what the scientific community knew about how diseases are spread and how epidemics are caused. He thought the same principles underlying the spread of disease might also apply to the spread of ideas. This ultimately led him to write the best-selling book *The Tipping Point*. In 1996, he went to *The New Yorker* magazine where he still works. The *Record* editor spoke to Malcolm in his parents' home in Elmira.

***RECORD*:** If it's OK with you, I would like to begin with your book, *The Tipping Point*. In a few sentences, can you explain the thesis of your book?

MALCOLM GLADWELL: The idea of the book is that one of the best ways to understand the way ideas (any kind of information) move through a community is to think of ideas as viruses, and the process of moving through a population as an epidemic. There is a great correspondence between the principles that guide the outbreak of an infectious disease and the principles that guide the outbreak of an infectious idea. The study of epidemics has a lot to offer the rest of us who want to make sense of the world. For example, often change, especially rapid change, baffles us and we lack a way of understanding it.

***RECORD*:** What inspired you to write the book?

GLADWELL: At the *Washington Post*, I covered medicine and spent a lot of time writing about HIV. I became interested in the dynamics of epidemics, in particular how epidemics differ from our intuition about them. I was struck by how epidemiologists have all this wonderful specialized knowledge but did not know or never thought of sharing it outside their own medical community. It was so relevant because many of us are in the business of trying to spread a contagious idea throughout the population. They had studied it for 50 or 100 years. It provided me with a great opportunity to break down a wall that existed between that profession and the rest of us.

***RECORD*:** You seem to challenge much of what we take for granted. We have a saying, "Don't sweat the small stuff." You seem to be saying that the little things are often the most important in starting an epidemic.

GLADWELL: The way I would put it is like this. In our society, we assume we cannot have dramatic results without dramatic change. Sometimes we forget that people and situations can change dramatically with the slightest push. That doesn't fit into modern rational models of change but it is much more consistent with the way the world really works. In some ways, it is a kind of pre-modern way of looking at the world. We forget pre-modern ways of looking at the world to our detriment.

***RECORD*:** In that sense, the book is encouraging for people working in the church. You maintain change is possible if we can find the key. It is often something small we may have considered insignificant.

GLADWELL: Yes, the key to successful change is not resources; it is intelligence and faith. We often mistakenly think we have to have lots and lots of money and people. We don't. What we need is to be thoughtful and motivated and to consider the little levers that will produce a big effect.

***RECORD*:** You speak of special people who are involved in spreading a social epidemic:

those who know a great many people (connectors), those who have knowledge and are willing to share it (mavens) and salespeople.

GLADWELL: The idea is, just as a disease epidemic is sustained by a small percentage of the population who are exceptional and different from the rest of us (more energetic or they travel more), the same applies to social epidemics. The kinds of people who are capable of spreading the word are different from the rest of us. Jesus' disciples Peter and Paul may have come from humble beginnings; but, I imagine, if we went back and met them, these were intelligent, charismatic, social, energetic, brave people. They were selected to be disciples for a reason. Jesus himself was not an ordinary person; he was extraordinary. An epidemic like the early Christian church was one of the most extraordinary social epidemics we have ever seen. It was created and sustained by a small group of people who were exceptional. They had rare and wonderful talents. I think that is true of any kind of message that spreads throughout a population. People who have particular gifts — innate, rare and powerful gifts — spread it.

In my book, I delineate three kinds of gifts: the gift of being very social, the gift of having a kind of specialized knowledge, and the gift of being persuasive. I don't think every epidemic requires all three kinds. I simply believe these are the kinds of people who tend to play large roles in epidemics. I suspect that if we knew the disciples well, to use them as examples again, some of them would be people who would be extraordinarily well-connected in the Holy Land at that time. People knew and respected them. Others were charismatic. They could draw a crowd when they spoke. I use the example in my book of John Wesley. He was an OK speaker but certainly not the most charismatic speaker of his time. His gift was energy — he travelled incredible distances. And he had a gift of organization. Today, he would have been a CEO of a Fortune 500 company or the general of a large army. He had that kind of mind. I think it was obvious when people met him that here was a man who could build an organization.

***RECORD*:** You mention part of his



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strength lay in the fact he organized people into small groups.

GLADWELL: In that part of the book, I was trying to understand what makes a successful force for change, what makes it possible to reach large numbers of people with a message. Most of us, when we are infected with some kind of message, are infected in a group. We learn about something in church, or school or the workplace — in a group context. Why are some groups effective at doing that and some groups are not? Some churches fail and some don't? Part of that has to do with the size of the group. A lot of anthropologists theorize that our brains — which evolved for social reasons to keep track of people we love and care about and depend upon — have a kind of natural limit of how many relationships we can hold at one time. That limit seems to be about 150. If we look through history at the most effective size of social groups, it seems to be about 150, whether it is villages or military organizations. Part of Wesley's genius was to understand that small groups have a kind of inherent power. So he created these tightly knit, powerful religious cells. They were the basis for the Methodist epidemic.

***RECORD*:** But what about the large mega-churches, especially those in the United States?

GLADWELL: I have two responses. Large churches that work do so because they divide their congregations into smaller groups — small worship groups, Bible study groups or some kind of smaller unit where people receive intimacy and reinforcement. The large group becomes a kind of once-a-week, powerful, collective experience, but no one pretends to know everyone within the larger church. The real church resides in the smaller groups. I don't think churches that have thousands of people actually do work. Many who go to them don't require an intimate commitment. A church that large is the religious experience of fast-food, in and out but with no lasting social ties. It is a small-demanding social and religious experience.

***RECORD*:** In a series we did last year on church growth, the author claimed that, of all the aspects involved, small groups are the most important.

GLADWELL: Well, there is peer pressure in small groups. Peer pressure is often used in a negative way but it can also be a positive thing. What it means is that you know the people in the group well enough to care about what they think. That is how change happens. I agree to go along with you, follow your example or work with you because I know you well enough to care what you think of me. I know you well enough to relate to you in a productive way. In a large group, people don't know each other well, and that's why large groups do not have the same contagious power. R

(This interview continues next month. Malcolm Gladwell will talk about what small churches might learn from his book, an aspect of holiness you probably have not considered, and how to make the gospel stick in today's culture)

The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference *by Malcolm Gladwell (Little, Brown, 2000, $34.95).*
Among the things you will learn in Gladwell's fascinating analysis: why young people continue to smoke despite the most sophisticated attempts to persuade them to stop, what killed crime in New York City, why *Sesame Street* and *Blues Clues* are successful children's programs, and why there has been a revival in Hush Puppy shoes. You will be surprised by Gladwell's answers.

Most important form of human communication

Paul Revere's ride is perhaps the most famous historical example of a word-of-mouth epidemic. A piece of extraordinary news travelled a long distance in a very short time, mobilizing an entire region to arms. Not all word-of-mouth epidemics are this sensational, of course. But it is safe to say that word of mouth is — even in this age of mass communications and multimillion-dollar advertising campaigns — still the most important form of human communication. Think, for a moment, about the last expensive restaurant you went to, the last expensive piece of clothing you bought, and the last movie you saw. In how many of those cases was your decision about where to spend your money heavily influenced by the recommendation of a friend? There are plenty of advertising executives who think that precisely because of the sheer ubiquity of marketing efforts these days, word-of-mouth appeals have become the only kind of persuasion that most of us respond to anymore.

— excerpt from *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell. Used by permission.

A brief introduction to the nominees for Moderator of the 127th General Assembly

On Sunday, June 3, 2001, the 127th General Assembly will open in Toronto. At that time, a new Moderator will be elected from a field of five candidates. This year, perhaps believing the "F" in the FLAMES initiative stood for "Female," the presbyteries have nominated more women than men. Voting to choose a Moderator-designate takes place prior to Assembly by all members of presbyteries across the country. The result should be known on April 2.

Maureen Kelly

As an active layperson at St. Andrew's Church, Brampton, Ontario, for 30 years, Maureen Kelly has been involved in a variety of roles, including elder, church school superintendent and co-ordinator of St. Andrew's Food Cupboard. Her understanding of the church at the grassroots level and its challenges has been expanded by the strategic planning sessions she has facilitated with numerous congregations.

But Kelly's energy and enthusiasm are not concentrated solely on the grassroots level. She has been a member of several national boards, agencies and committees, including three years as convener of the Life and Mission Agency. Currently, she is a member of the Assembly Council, represents the council on the Life and Mission Agency Committee and is convener of the International Ministries Advisory Committee. Wanting to broaden her outlook even more, she recently took part in a FLAMES mission trip to observe the work of the Church of North India.



All this, plus her participation in the working group Called to Covenant: Strengthening Congregational/Presbytery Relationships, has left Kelly with a deep and broad understanding of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

As Moderator, Kelly would be sensitive to the need of Assembly to be an open forum for all to speak and be heard. "It is important that we gather, discuss and decide on issues with God's guidance, as God inspires all commissioners, lay and ordained," she says.

Encouraging people to be aware that God calls each of us to serve him is important to Kelly. "We may sometimes feel like Jonah and protest going to Nineveh," she says, because it's easier to leave the work of Christ's church to the professional church workers. But in a year when the FLAMES initiative focuses on equipping the laity, Kelly would stress the need "to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives." Our "ordinary, everyday experiences can be fully used by God."

As a nurse, Maureen Kelly realizes God calls us to a variety of professions, positions and roles. "The way we take our 'church experience' into our community, the methods we use to let the love of Christ shine through us, and the comfort we have in sharing our faith in Christ with others are pressing issues for the people in our congregations," she says.

Mark Lewis

Mark Lewis was born in South Wales and raised in rural Canada. Like his father, a retired minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, he has served in a variety of rural and urban congregations. For the past 3½ years, he has been minister of MacNab Street Church in Hamilton, Ontario.

From 1997-2000, Lewis served as convener of the General Assembly Council. Since 1997, he has been convener of the National Long-Range Planning Committee and played a leading role in the development of the FLAMES initiative. His experience at the national level has not caused him to lose track of the local church, however. As convener of the Assembly Council, he listened to Presbyterians from across the country. "Sometimes, at the national level, loud voices can dominate the discussion and intimidate the quiet voices," he says. "We need to listen to the quiet voices because they express the wisdom of faithful Presbyterians working hard in congregations."



Lewis believes inspirational biblical preaching is crucial to the future of the church. (In 1997, the *Record* carried an ad asking readers who they considered to be the best preachers in the church. Of the 154 responses received, Lewis drew the most votes, followed closely by *Record* columnist Tony Plomp.) He loves to preach to young people and has been guest speaker at many youth conferences. He was the opening night speaker at Canada Youth 2000 and will be the theme speaker at this year's follow-up conference.

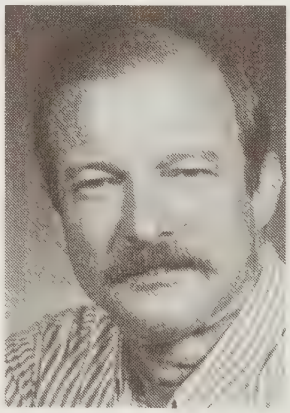
As Moderator, Lewis's first goal would be to moderate the General Assembly with "compassion, faithfulness and humour," just as he endeavoured to do as convener of the General Assembly Council. Throughout the year, he would uphold congregations in celebrating the FLAMES priorities — priorities that were established by listening to congregations across the country.

Lewis believes the most urgent need of the church is to hear and respond to God's gospel of redemption. "The whole world is hungering and thirsting for the deep and powerful meaning that Christ brings to our existence," he says.

Mark Lewis also believes the church needs to serve both the local community and the whole world. Practising what he preaches, he was named Citizen of the Year in Dunnville, Ontario, during his time as minister of Knox Church. And as for the wider picture, Lewis says the church needs to serve the world through international mission. "Our society is keenly aware of the needs of the world, and the church must be perceived to be an agency that is deeply concerned for suffering people all around the globe."

Joe Reed

"The church has given me many gifts," says Joe Reed. "Parishes in suburban New York and Montreal, inner-city work at Tyndale-St. Georges, Montreal, teaching in West Africa, and voter registration in the American South in the 1960s." As might be expected, these varied gifts have left him with vivid memories. Such as the time he was talking with an alcoholic transient one moment and attending a Board of Trade luncheon an hour later. The church enables such "incongruous and diverse conversations," says Reed. They are "reminders of our humanity."



Since 1986, Reed has served as area liaison missionary for Central America and the Caribbean. "A wonder of the call to Central America," he says, "has been the chance to cross the land, to talk about mission and to listen. To hear from colleagues in ministry, both lay and ordained."

"You Presbyterians are hard on yourselves," a co-worker from another denomination once told Reed. "We have the same problems, but we don't brood." Reed agrees. "We need to rediscover the excitement of being both Christian and Presbyterian," he says. "Great things happen in rural parishes and in city cores and, of course, in missions in Canada and abroad. How many children are alive today because of our workers? How many have caught the vision in our seminary libraries and classrooms?"

An unexpected challenge and joy for Reed has been listening to the number of congregations and people who are in pain. Some of the pain is inevitable, springing from life's transitions. But some we inflict upon ourselves, he believes, "a product of clashing visions and personalities."

Presbyterians need to celebrate their witness, faithful and true, Reed states. They need to remember the good in our time and to give thanks that God has entrusted this age to us. Let's rejoice in the work of Presbyterian World Service and Development, he says. "Let's recover the excitement of service, of love for those who are outside as well as inside the church."

"Your church shows it is important to serve, rather than simply to preach — to preach through actions," a Central American friend suggested to Reed. This is a model not to recapture but to reaffirm.

At Christmas, we celebrate God's love made incarnate, made real. For Joe Reed, it is a love made real "for street kids in Managua and for kids in Canadian suburbs, for seniors in nursing homes and for folks in the pews. Each beloved of God and called to service."

Helen Smith



The Apostle Paul uses the image of the body to describe the church. It is, says Helen Smith, "an image of giving and receiving, of partnership, growth and renewal, of healing and hope." It is an image that has provided her with a framework for her ministry.

That ministry has included pastorates in Edmonton, and in Kent County and Thornhill in Ontario, the latter two as part of a team ministry with her husband, Robert Smith. It also includes her current work at Evangel Hall, an inner-city mission of the Presbyterian Church in downtown Toronto. She has served as moderator of three presbyteries, as a member of the Committee on Church Doctrine (including one year as convener), and is currently a member of the Justice Ministries Advisory Committee. Ecumenically, she represents The Presbyterian Church in Canada on CANAAC, the Caribbean and North America Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. A daughter of the manse, Smith has a special place in her heart for the baptismal font of Jubilee Church, Stayner, Ontario, "where the adventure began."

The FLAMES initiative for 2001-2002, "equipping the laity," is particularly exciting for Smith, fitting well with Paul's body-building imagery. "I sense a tremendous energy within our church waiting to be released, looking for appropriate channels, appropriate mission endeavours," she says. "We all have gifts to bring, gifts that build up the church, that bring light into darkness, that heal and help — whether it is the able-bodied young woman constructing storage sheds for Habitat for Humanity or the man in the wheelchair in the nursing home who holds my hand and sings with me." The church needs to continue to offer opportunities for people to put their faith to work. In the words of hymn-writer Fred Kaan, "worship and work must be one."

Smith also believes the clergy can be equipped by the laity. "The Evangel Hall community, a community of giving and receiving a variety of gifts, has been a constant inspiration to me."

As Moderator, Helen Smith would be interested in hearing the stories of the church and its mission, and in helping to get those stories out to all branches of the church. She wants to help Presbyterians to see new avenues for service and to encourage them to use their gifts. "Throughout my ministry, I have seen that when we share our individual riches and our individual poverties — and we all have both — in the name of Jesus, then great things happen."

Glynis Williams

Glynis Williams is an ordained minister and director of Action Réfugiés Montréal, a joint ministry with the Anglican Church, supported by Canada Ministries. She has served the Presbytery of Montreal in several capacities, and the national church as a member and convener of the Presbyterian World Service and Development Committee. She also served as a Presbyterian representative on the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees for six years.

Given her background, it should come as no surprise that Williams has always had an appreciation for Karl Barth's image of a Christian as someone with a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other. "It suggests," she says, "that we can only truly understand the gospel when we approach it with the perspective of the world around us, with all the good and bad news that unfolds daily."

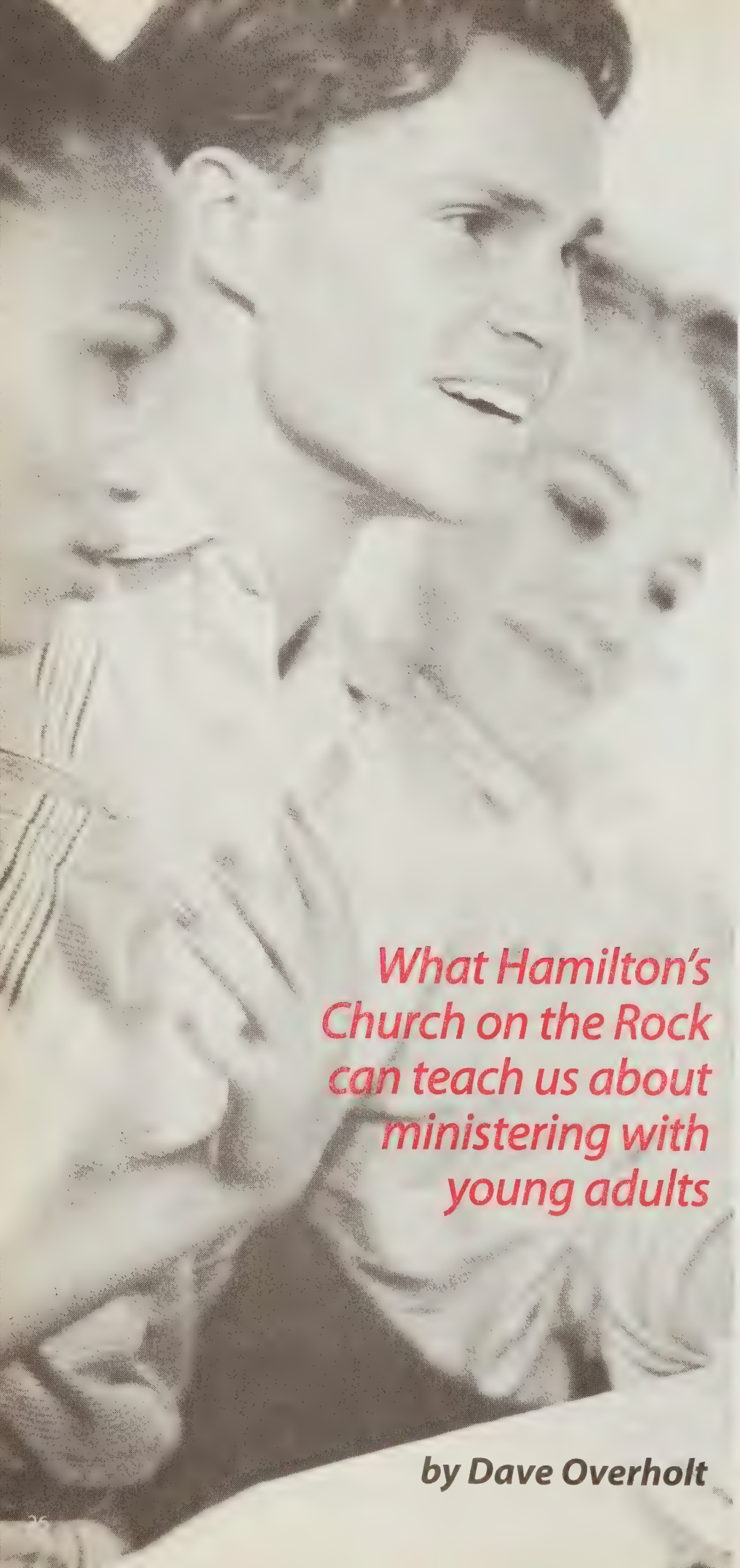
When issues are complex or involve unfathomable suffering, the temptation is to avoid thinking about them or to retreat into simple affirmations of faith," says Williams. But in the long run, such action (or inaction) is frustrating and unsatisfying. "For God is in every corner of this sometimes dark but magnificent creation ... calling us to use our hearts and minds to struggle with the big questions and, then, to act."



Will our denomination die because it is obsessively worried about its survival? Or will it be, as Williams envisions it, a "place where people concerned about God's world and all God's children search for ways to make sense of the challenges and sadness that confront us all." "Fear not, for I am with you," Jesus reassured his terrified disciples. "Imagine what The Presbyterian Church in Canada might be if we all embraced that promise," Williams exclaims.

As Moderator, Williams would welcome the opportunity to hear about the good things that are happening in the church across the country — "to see firsthand the results of people who are reading both the Bible and the newspaper and to celebrate their faithfulness."

And, for those who might wonder if her involvement with refugees presents too narrow a focus to bring to the role of Moderator, Glynis Williams says she prefers to think of refugee ministry as a window on the world — a world that Jesus invites us to engage in and to pray for. Perhaps, she suggests, some of the experiences, challenges and blessings she can share will be thought-provoking for others. "Together, we could affirm that the gospel message is a message worth taking seriously. Together, we might discover new ways of understanding creation and worshipping the Creator."



My,

What Hamilton's Church on the Rock can teach us about ministering with young adults

by Dave Overholt

It's Sunday evening and time to go to Church on the Rock in Hamilton, Ontario. The hallway into the college auditorium is packed wall to wall with young people in every clothing and hairstyle imaginable. The place feels like an airport arrival terminal with shouts and hugs of recognition rising above the constant chatter of catching up. About 600 high school and university students, and a good smattering of young-at-heart adults, are ready for a two-hour service of praise, drama, video clips, prayer, random acts of kindness, relevant message and a creative worship response.

This is the young-at-heart targeted church of which I am the pastor. We minister to all age groups, but the average age of our people is approximately 20 years old. Church on the Rock started as a youth group for six small churches. The ministry grew to several hundred with many parents and adults attending and claiming the youth service as their own. After much soul-searching and prayer, the founding churches planted us as a separate church in January 1997.

I have found that the younger generation of Canadians is spiritually hungry and open to God moving in their lives, but they have a different set of lenses through which they see the church and faith. I have had the privilege of ministering with adolescents for 21 years. During this life-long sentence of joy, I have seen a number of changes in youth ministry and the church.

Culture gap

Twenty years ago, there was still an understanding of what a church is and does by the average teenager. Today, there is an ever-widening gap between the church culture and the adolescent culture-at-large. The decline of attend-

#6 in the series focusing on ministry with children, teens and young adults

how things have changed!

ance at religious services combined with the "greying" of our congregations has produced a younger generation that has not experienced the church. To stretch the gap farther apart, the youth culture is changing at an ever-increasing rate.

Change is the new air adolescents breathe. As any family arriving in a new culture knows, the young are always the early adapters. Our youth are adapting and enjoying riding the multiple waves of change. In fact, young people are usually the trend-setters. There are companies that hire young people to travel the world in order to report trends that can be marketed *en masse*. They call these travellers "cool hunters."

The gap of a church culture intent on preservation and a youth culture in constant change produces a Grand Canyon of distance. Most of the teens I come in contact with in the broader population do not even understand the words "hymnal" or "Communion." The different dress, language and rituals of the church translate into a foreign culture. Some young people who came over to my house recently did not even know that Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birth. Youth drop-in workers are at the point of tears with what to do with their secular students who have recently decided to become Christians. These new teen believers have few places where they can "fit in" and are welcomed. Unfortunately, most secular teens are not able to make the jump.

Many secular parents, too, have become less trusting of the church over the past 20 years. Teens sneak out of their homes to come to our youth-targeted church. "If my mom and dad found out I was going to church, I would be dead meat," reported one frightened teen. We have had a string of parents who have come to check out our services to make sure we are not a cult. Their thought is that surely no teenagers would *really* want to go to church. On other occasions, we have discovered the visitors were parents who made the jump from church years ago and don't want their teens to "regress."

Adolescents who grow up in the church have a much better understanding of church culture, but are less and less connected to the music, dress and style of church. As adolescents are becoming adult individuals for the first time in their development, they are choosing between symbols of childhood to leave behind and those that will represent the new self. Unfortunately, the church culture is often left behind as a children's thing. Confirmation is often seen as graduation for the local church.

Spiritual interest

Even though there is a tainted cloud surrounding this culture gap, changes over the past few years have revealed some brilliant silver linings. The past several years have seen a steady increase in the spiritual interest of the average teenager. Bibby and Posterski told us in *Teen Trends* that, although religious involvement is still declining in Canada, spiritual interests are rising. I see this trend continuing. Twenty years ago, it would have been difficult to start a conversation around spiritual things with a young person; not so now. Spiritual interest and hunger are apparent in our high schools and college campuses.

A secular university student stopped me and wanted to talk to me because she could sense I was "in touch with the spirit world." I attend classes at the University of Toronto where spiritual experience is discussed as a part of reality, not as a bygone idea that has been conquered by the enlightenment. As we conversed, I told her I was in touch with the spirit world through the Spirit of God. She was neither put off nor felt cheated when I told her of my experience of knowing God through Jesus. Her only comment was, "Why don't other Christians talk about God in this way?"

We live in a unique time when we can talk to our young people about spiritual things. They are looking for adults who are real and have experienced God. Their spiritual interest is not so much based in institutions as it is in experience.

Experience / participation

There is so much information overload in our present culture that personal experience becomes the new authority. Why should I try a certain herb for healing? There may be articles on the Internet both for and against the product but, if my friend has experienced help, I'm

going to try it. Twenty years ago, youth ministry was not so experientially based; teens were happier to be spectators.

A teen I counselled told me how her mother's boyfriend came over and performed a pagan spiritual rite on her. They passed her pain into a rope that could be thrown on an enemy as a curse. The teen thought I would be happy about her experience because she knew I was interested in spiritual things. It did not occur to her that I may have any negative thoughts concerning placing curses on people. We live in a world where a New Age "out-of-body" experience book is mixed in a display with Billy Graham's autobiography. Spiritual experience is prior to the thought or analysis surrounding God.



Young people's priority on spiritual experience is seen in that they will not be satisfied as spectators. Years ago in youth ministry, you could take teens to a Christian concert or throw on a Christian movie. These days, instead of watching TV, young people are creating their own Web pages. Christian concert attendance is lack-lustre in my area, but youth worship services are filled. The new generation is not satisfied with merely watching a band, they want to participate through moshing, dancing or even worshipping. Because of this emphasis on experience, there is a resurgence of youth praise services.

Youth praise services are exploding across Canada. Many universities are holding praise services in their campus pubs. In Hamilton, Ontario, McMaster University was the first university to start this trend with "Church at the John." They boast 600 students, some of whom will stand throughout the two-hour service. "Church at the John" is aptly named as the worship is held in the campus pub named The Down Stairs John. From coast to coast, other campuses host praise services with names such as "Church on Tap," "Church in the Box," "Church in the Hangar" and "Church in the Turret." Youth praise services are springing up in cities and small towns. I recently spoke at a youth praise service of 200 high school students where the town's population numbers only 1,000.

Last summer, I led a wilderness-canoeing trip for the expressed purpose of teaching spiritual disciplines. The university students revelled in the practices of silence, meditation and prayers of rest. They experienced meeting with God. Their experience did not have to be all "contemporary," but it needed to be experiential. It is not that the students have rejected logic; rather, they want to know if the subject is relevant now! If it is, then debate and discussion are enjoyed. In the past, unfortunately, some of the church's interests and discussions have been far removed from everyday life. The pattern of experience preceding thought is not far from the experience of Acts. The church experienced the falling of the Holy Spirit and the expansion of the gospel to the Gentiles, first, and then they reflected on their experience. The Christ that the new generation will understand must somehow be spiritually experienced or Christ will seem meaningless.

The areas of participation and relationships are places where the traditional church can bridge the gap of cultures. I have visited many local churches where some students will come out and learn a church culture for the sake of participation and friends. In these experiences, a local parish will have their young people as regular, significant contributors to the service. For example, young people will play their guitars along with the piano, or they will give a life story in the message, or sing for an offertory. Because of the desire for participation, a student will walk over the bridge of participation to a different culture, and he/she will bring some friend along who will come out to see their friend play guitar for the pre-service choruses.

Relationships

Bibby and Posterski's book *Teen Trends* speaks of teens' two greatest sources of enjoyment: music and friendships. You can see these two coming together in praise services. The music kicks in and the students move and sing in community participation. The students don't mind the shabby places, the nonprofessional music or the words projected on bedsheets. There is something about the raw feel of this worship that allows people to participate physically and moves their hearts. They simply want to experience their friends, their music and their God.

Canadian students are open to a relationship with Jesus but perhaps not in the guise of what many of us are used to. The people of my church are not responding to a Jesus exalted high and lifted up as the

For further study and action

1. How does our congregation recognize young people as a part of the congregation?
2. If I was sent to a foreign culture as a missionary, what things would I do first? Is there any correlation to reaching out to the youth culture around us?
3. How do we convey both a healthy acceptance of the broader Body of Christ and the advantages to real involvement in a local congregation in a milieu of declining loyalty?
4. What are some possible elements of a worship service in which we could "experience" the presence of God?
5. What are some possible mechanisms for adding creativity to our worship services?

head of the church. They listen to a Jesus who is beside them as a friend and a brother. Churches that can communicate to the new generation have graciously moved from an emphasis on the transcendence of Jesus toward a relational emphasis on the immanence of Jesus, Emmanuel, "God with us." Past generations met God through hymns that were doctrinal and informational (e.g., "A mighty fortress is our God"). The new songs being written and the old hymns that are still loved address Jesus as a friend and a lover of our souls. Hymns that are still loved by my church of young people are "More love to thee" and "Be thou my vision." These songs address Jesus directly and are intimate. Most of the new songs also address Jesus as in prayer and are intimate with titles such as, "Arms of love" or "Faithful one." To help the new generation understand who Christ is, we need to communicate through the relational facets of our faith.

Loyalty and creativity

Another quality of this newer generation is that their loyalty is as short as their attention span. Twenty years ago, my youth group had a certain pride in their church and their youth group. It was a part of their identity to be from "West Sommerset" and not from "Newfane" — the churches in which they grew up. Now, groups travel with their cluster of friends to the newest and the best. Many times, the real loyalty is with their friends; fewer of the youth church attendees have family connections, so the result is a sense of church polygamy. This is taking some getting used to for those of us concerned with the health of the local parish. A question remains for those who pastor the adolescents, "How do we convey both a healthy acceptance of the broader Body of Christ and the advantages to real involvement in a local congregation?"

This new generation has forced me to keep our services fresh and creative. I find if two services are exactly the same — the same order, similar songs, no surprises and no change — the students I minister with tell me we are in a rut. And in the young person's mind, a rut is simply a grave with the ends blown out. Educationally, I understand that rituals give us a sense of comfort and being at home. Creativity adds the spice that keeps us awake. We need both in our services. If I change too much, even the young people feel ill at ease. However, if there are no surprises, they leave in droves. As a pastor, I have both the problem and the privilege of being a lightning rod for how the service goes. I often run out of ideas or try on some that should have been left in the closet of my mind. To help with this, I have built a creativity team around me. I sit down with them and explain my sermon. They brainstorm with me on ways to bring out the concepts through dramas, visuals, sound bites, and they help me see what ideas to leave behind in my creative closet.

Congregational ministry that includes adolescents has never been more difficult or more rewarding. The greatest bridge over this culture gap is, of course, the bridge of loving relationships. I remember my own teen years when church seemed a bit "too weird." Gramma Hammond, an 80-plus sweetheart of a lady, would tuck her arm in mine and walk me to the church parking lot talking to me all the time about the love of God. Those loving relationships were probably the greatest bridge-builders to help me understand a culture that was changing a bit slower than mine. May we all take up the challenge to love in the midst of change. R

Dave Overholt teaches youth ministry at McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ont., and is minister of The Rock in Hamilton, a congregation made up mainly of young adults.

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Second of a six-part series on effective ways of communicating the Christian faith to children



Thou shalt not Wiggle

by Margaret Brouillette

What I learned in Sunday school was that big people wanted little people to sit still, even if God made them to wiggle

"Thou shalt stay still in thy chair with all your arms, legs and other body parts.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Thou shalt keep thy mouth closed.' All the Sunday school and club programs hang on these two commandments."

I'm sure that must be right, because they are the first commandments I learned, and the only ones that were repeated to me endlessly throughout my years of Sunday school. I got stickers and earned points, I was reprimanded and shamed — all in the name of learning the Word of God. What I learned was that big people wanted little people to sit still, even if God made them to wiggle.

Of course, we teachers don't admit outright that our main goal is to keep kids quiet. We say we want them to learn about Jesus. We want them to become Christians, and to believe and practise the Word of God. But when it comes right down to it, we spend most of our energy on decibel levels and fidget-control.

When it comes right down to it, we spend most of our energy on decibel levels and fidget-control

How do I know? Listen to Sunday school teachers at coffee-time or in the church lobby. How many have said, "I'm afraid the Grade 5s are having difficulty controlling their anger in the schoolyard" or "I wish Mary Jo could go to sleep at night with the peace of God in her heart"? Isn't it true we more commonly hear, "I just can't get them to stay quiet!" or "That little Joey sure has ants in his pants"?



When Jesus answered the Pharisees about what God really wanted, he said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." That is the goal every teacher in the church school (including the pastor) should have for his or her life, and the lives of each of the listeners.

Learning to love God, his Word, his church and his people can be an exciting adventure. It touches our minds, our emotions and our behaviour. It changes every aspect of our lives. Loving God will be learned and expressed in as many different ways as there are different personalities. For most of us, that has got to imply some noise and activity.

So relax. Get to know your kids. Watch how they work and play and learn naturally. Does Jason sit up straight or slouch when he's watching television? Does slouching in Sunday school mean he's not interested?

Does Brenda scribble when she's talking on the phone or listening to music? She'll probably hear you better if you let her scribble in class.

Is Becky always talking? Did you know she only learns what she says herself? God made her that way. Give her lots of opportunity to repeat what you are saying, to explain it to someone else, to continue the thought or the application until she gets it.

Is Kevin forever fiddling with pencils and erasers and tissues and loose change and whatever he can get his hands on? Does it really matter? Give him a little sponge ball to squeeze or a few Legos to put together while he participates. Don't worry, he can do two things at once.

Now, if Nancy is putting on nail polish, and Joey and Peter are trading baseball cards, and Sandy and Kaitlin are climbing on the resource cupboard, that's different. The problem, however, is not the noise level, but that someone is missing the point. You need to adjust. Instead of bringing in the army (or the Sunday school superintendent), try to teach in a way that will channel that energy into learning experiences.

Remember Eutychus? He was very still and quiet on the edge of the window — until he went to sleep and fell out. Keeping kids quiet is not our goal. Teaching them to love God is.

Just thinking about it gets me moving! R

Margaret Brouillette is a mother, a public school religious education teacher and a Sunday school director in Saint Luc, Que. Her first book, *Famous Jerks of the Bible*, is due to be released in the summer.

Canadian congregations receive grant from American institute

Knox Church, Mitchell, and the pastoral charge of Knox Church, Thedford, and St. Andrew's Church, Watford, Ontario, have received a 2001 Worship Renewal Grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The grant is to fund a worship planning and leading training program for laypeople drawn from six rural/small-town Presbyterian congregations in southwestern Ontario. Christine O'Reilly, minister of the Thedford/Watford charge, and Peter Bush, minister of Knox Church, Mitchell, are the project's directors.

"We are excited at the prospect of being involved in helping lay worship leaders develop their gifts," says Bush. "We hope this project will become a model for other training programs involving rural congregations."

The grant program, in its second year at Calvin Institute, will award more than $600,000 US to 47 programs. This year, the institute received more than 130 proposals from almost 20 denominations from 40 states and provinces. The Presbyterian project was one of three Canadian projects to receive funding, and the only one in Ontario.

Presbytery offers "theological school"

Last fall, Presbyterian seminaries weren't the only church bodies offering theological education. Forty-five "students" enrolled for the theological school sponsored by the Presbytery of Niagara at Welland Hungarian Church, Welland, Ontario, in November. The classes, held every Thursday, began with a discussion on "Theology Today," led by Geoffrey Johnston, a retired professor of The Presbyterian College, Montreal. The second hour centred on the theme "Waiting Upon God," examined in four aspects: (Waiting Upon God ...) in sermon, in prayer, in drama, in music. The presenters were Art Van Seters, Josephine Meeker, Heather Vais and Susan Kerr.



Art Van Seters (left), Geoffrey Johnston and Charles Henderson in discussion at the theological school held at Welland Hungarian Church, Welland, Ont.

Toronto presbyteries demonstrate commitment to inner-city ministry

The presbyteries of East and West Toronto have responded to the growing need for support services for homeless people and those in need with grants totalling $900,000 to Evangel Hall, a Presbyterian inner-city mission. Last September, the Presbytery of West Toronto committed $400,000 toward the construction of a new Evangel Hall, to be combined with up to 75 units of supportive housing. In November, the Presbytery of East Toronto approved a $500,000 grant for the project.

"It's a great moment when the church steps in to help the Hall and its clients in their hour of need," says Evangel Hall president Cec Adams. "The Hall has been operating from the same building for the past 82 years. With the number of people we help growing each day, we are pushing the present building beyond its limits."

The $900,000 provides a solid base from which to enter into negotiations with foundations, the private sector and the City of Toronto, which is administering a major federal homeless-funds program. An immediate priority is to secure a suitable site in the Evangel Hall neighbourhood.

David Cameron, president of the board of Evangel Hall Non-Profit Housing Corporation, which owns and operates the 46-unit Portland Place, said it was "extremely gratifying to note how readily both presbyteries responded to the growing need for the expanded services to be provided by Evangel Hall." He also noted the presbyteries' endorsement "recognizes the need for a partnership approach with government and the private sector."

Evangel Hall was founded by the Presbyterian Church in 1913 and serves homeless and socially isolated adults and youth in a variety of programs. Portland Place, sponsored by Evangel Hall, opened in 1991 and houses some 60 people.

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Anniversary celebration recalls frontier days



Participants experienced a bit of history when they entered tiny, historic McQueen Church during the 90th anniversary celebrations of Presbyterianism in Grande Prairie, Alberta.

When the 90th anniversary of a Presbyterian presence in Grande Prairie, Alberta, was celebrated last year, participants took a step back to the days of the Old West.

It was barely 40 years after Confederation when Presbyterian missionary Alexander Forbes arrived in the tiny settlement, described by many as the last Canadian frontier, 500 kilometres north of Edmonton. Today, his name is still a familiar one in Grande Prairie, as witnessed by Forbes Presbyterian Church and Alexander Forbes Primary School. Another school, Montrose High School, is named after his wife's (Agnes) family home in Scotland. And if that wasn't enough to bring his name to mind during the anniversary celebrations, the city declared an Alexander Forbes Week.

In the local museum, a display of historical photographs lined the walls. Also on display were two quilts, one made from scraps sent to the WMS by a friend of Agnes's who worked at Eaton's. In addition to the museum, the two schools owing their names to the Forbeses presented a display of collages.

When the bell rang calling participants to worship, it was the bell of tiny McQueen Church, the first Protestant church in Grande Prairie, built by Forbes and his congregation and dedicated in 1911. The church is named after David McQueen, home mission convener in Edmonton, first moderator of the Synod of Alberta and Moderator of the General Assembly in 1912. Inside the church, the original organ pumped out old favourites.

After the hymn-sing, it was time for fellowship and food at the seniors centre, with women in ankle-length skirts, lace-trimmed blouses and period hats at several tables. After dinner, a series of small vignettes were played out: Alexander Forbes accepting the call to Canada; his marriage to Agnes Sorrel; WMS members answering the roll call by reciting a verse of Scripture; and an enactment of a bar scene, complete with accusations of cheating at cards and gunfire (a trumped-up joke on an assistant minister who insisted nothing exciting ever happened in Grande Prairie). *(From a report by Patricia Schneider)*

briefly noted

Mission staff departures: *Sonya Henderson*, for Romania, first week of Feb.

National staff departures: Matthias Mayer, completed his contract position as program assistant, *Celebrate!* Committee, Dec. 31.

Deaths: DeCourcy Hamilton Rayner, editor of the *Presbyterian Record* from 1958 to 1978, Moderator of the 103rd General Assembly, died in Toronto, Dec. 21.

Church leaders call for peace with justice in Middle East

The leaders of nine Christian churches in Canada, including the Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Rev. Glen Davis, have issued a statement on conditions for peace in the Middle East.

"We believe that God desires both Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace, security and economic sufficiency," the statement says. "That is part of the message of the biblical prophets, part of the fullness of life which Jesus proclaimed and part of the vision of the historic church of Jerusalem."

"Palestinians have the right to exist in peace and freedom in an internationally recognized homeland and state," the statement declares. "A just and lasting peace demands the speedy implementation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, the withdrawal of Israel from settlements in Gaza and the West Bank, and the provision of territorial integrity for a Palestinian state."

The statement also says: "Israel must also be assured of its right to exist in peace and security within internationally recognized borders. Israel's legitimacy as a contemporary state, long accepted in international law, must also be affirmed within the movements of the region and throughout the world."

The statement calls for "continued dialogue to ensure that Jerusalem be open and accessible to the people of the three faiths that hold it sacred, and to all residents of the region who see it as the centre of their livelihood and identity."

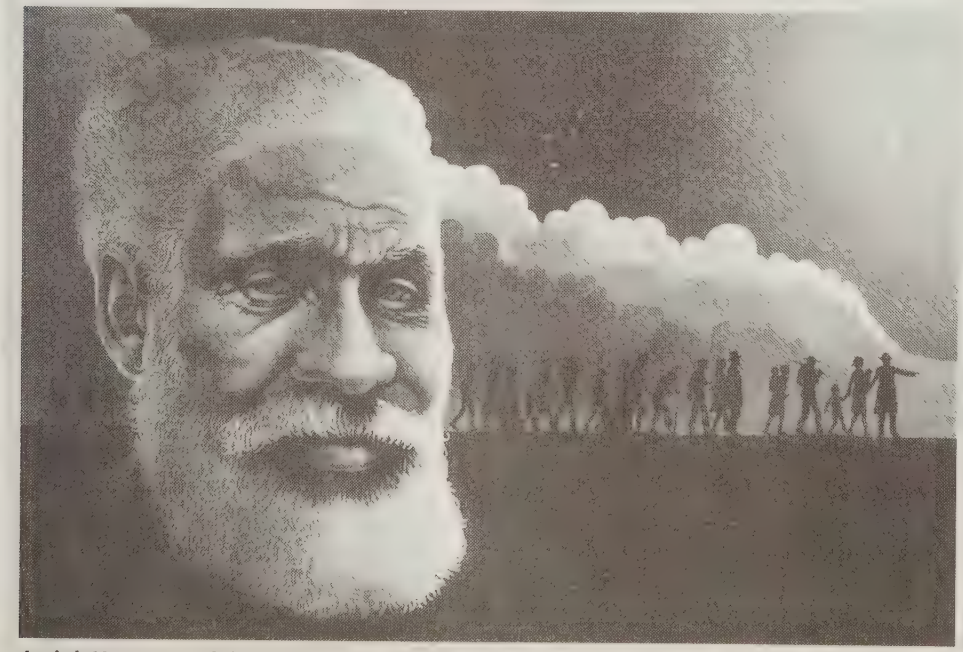
The statement concludes, in part: "Like the church leaders of Jerusalem, we believe that, one day, justice will prevail and violence will give way to peace and co-existence. We commit ourselves to continue to work together with all who share this hope."

Anti-slavery movement in Canada to be marked by national exhibit

On February 5, 2001, the National Archives of Canada and the National Library of Canada will open an exhibition marking the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada in 1851. The exhibition was produced at the invitation of the J'Nikira Dinqinesh Education Centre of Ottawa.

The exhibition draws on the collections of both institutions to illustrate the history of early black settlement in Canada and the effect of the international anti-slavery movement until 1865. Presbyterians will find it interesting to know that prominent Presbyterians were among the founding members of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada. Most notably, Rev. Dr. Michael Willis, principal of Knox College and later a Moderator of General Assembly, was the society's first president.

The exhibition is open February 5 to May 27, 2001, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week at the National Archives in Ottawa.



Josiah Henson and the Underground Railroad **by Tony Kew. Reproduced with permission of the Canada Post Corporation and the National Archives of Canada - POS-3702.**

Colombian churches look to Canadian congregations for refugee help

Colombian churches have appealed to Canadian congregations to sponsor refugee families from their country.

Colombia is a country at war, a war that has been going on almost continuously for 50 years. As a result, there are currently about two million internally displaced persons in Colombia — the most of any country in the world except Sudan. The displaced are mostly rural or small-town residents who have been forced to flee to the cities by the actions of paramilitary and guerilla groups. Some are fleeing because of direct threats on their lives. Children and women (frequently widows and heads of the household) are bearing the brunt of the conflict.

The Canadian government has responded to the crisis by allocating a quota of 450 government-sponsored refugees from Colombia. But the problem is much larger. Many people under threat have no place to go. The only other available avenue is private sponsorship, such as sponsorship by congregations. Private sponsorship entails a congregation taking care of the financial and social support of a family for one year. Some Presbyterian congregations are experienced in the process and are willing to provide guidance.

For more information on this appeal, please contact Presbyterian World Service and Development at 1-800-619-7301, ext. 252.

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Timothy Njoya receives human rights award

Kenyan human rights activist Rev. Timothy Njoya has been selected as the winner of the 2000 John Humphrey Freedom Award presented by the Montreal-based human rights centre Rights & Democracy. The award is given each year to a front-line organization or individual for exceptional achievement in the defence and promotion of human rights and democratic development. Njoya was cited as "an inspiration to all of those who struggle for peace and justice in Kenya."

Njoya is no stranger to The Presbyterian Church in Canada. In 1995, he was recognized by the church for his combination of theology and activism when he was presented with the E. H. Johnson Award at the 121st General Assembly. To honour him on his latest recognition, an informal reception was held at church offices on December 15.

news scan

Seniors and couples with children mostly likely churchgoers

Seniors and couples with children are the most likely people to be regular churchgoers, says Statistics Canada. Married couples ages 25 to 44 with young children are more likely to worship regularly — defined as at least once a month — than childless couples the same age. And adults living in common-law relationships are the least likely to show up in church on Sunday, according to the recently released General Social Survey for 1998. The study found rates of worship began to decline between the mid-teens and mid- to late-20s. They started to rise among adults in their early 30s, peaking among seniors 75 and over. About 34 per cent of Canadians ages 15 and over attended a religious service at least once a month in 1998, down from 41 per cent in 1988. *(The Globe and Mail)*

South Africa's men of peace unite to fight AIDS

At a rare appearance together on December 6, South Africa's three Nobel Peace Prize winners — F. W. De Klerk, Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu — launched a "prayer for HIV/AIDS" and called for an end to the silence and stigmatization surrounding the disease. The prayer service at St. Mary's Anglican Cathedral in Johannesburg represented the strongest commitment yet by prominent personalities to address AIDS in South Africa, where 4.2 million people (10 per cent of the population) are estimated to be infected with the HIV virus. *(ENI)*

Sipping safer than dipping, says cardiologist

Churchgoers who decline to drink from a common Communion cup for fear of disease but dip bread into the wine instead are far more susceptible to infection, according to a report recently released by the Anglican Church of Canada. Cardiologist Dr. David Gould, author of the study Eucharistic Practice and the Risk of Infection, has said that fingers which come into contact with the wine are a greater source of infection than lips which touch the Communion cup. *(ENI)*

Moscow becomes never-never land for Salvation Army

For the Moscow branch of the Salvation Army, the beginning of 2001 marked what the head of the Army's Russian operations, Kenneth Baillie, has called a "legal never-never land." "As of two days ago [January 1], we do not exist in Moscow," Baillie said, referring to the refusal of the Moscow authorities to re-register the city's branch of the Salvation Army as a religious organization. *(ENI)*

you were asking?

Appealing possibilities


Tony Plomp

question: *Can the session suspend a member from church membership and privileges? A case came to my attention in which a senior member of the congregation, and former elder, was told he was suspended for "disruptive behaviour."*

Yes, the session can suspend a member from church membership and privileges but only after due process. Due process is outlined in Chapter 9 of the Book of Forms. It is a process designed to be fair to all parties concerned.

So, if you have an issue with someone in the congregation, you should first deal with that person privately, according to the gospel mandate in Matthew 18:15-17. If that does not resolve the issue and the matter is serious enough for a charge to be laid, you may then proceed with your charge against the other person to the session, but not until you have communicated your intention to the person concerned. (The exception to this rule is when the issue involves a matter of sexual abuse and/or harassment. In such a case, the complaint is directed first to the appropriate committee of session or presbytery. It is the committee that approaches the person against whom the complaint is made — Book of Forms, Section 322.3.)

Matters proceed from there through a judicial process that resembles the judicial process of secular courts. This column is not the place to go into details but, suffice to say, in the matter you cited, the church member in question had the possibility of appeal to the presbytery against the actions of the session. Every church member and office-bearer should be aware of the appeal process that operates within the courts of this church. "It is the duty of sessions, presbyteries and synods to explain the forms of procedure fully and distinctly to parties concerned and to show them how they may carry their case to the superior court, if they desire to do so" (Section 333.1). R

Please send questions for Rev. Tony Plomp to tony_plomp@telus.net or 4020 Lancelot Dr., Richmond, B.C. V7C 4S3.

House Hunting

an empty satchel
his body folded against the red mailbox

on the ground at his elbow
cigarette butts, flat like tiny envelopes

his no-name head rubs the box
back and forth, dreaming
of a fireplace, a refrigerator, stairwells
winding to milk-white toilets

a warm doorway, with some fixed address
that Canada Post knows

— **Joan Bond**

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Ted Siverns

How to get God's attention

Righteousness, not economic considerations, is the "bottom line" with God

Isaiah 58

Isaiah is the most frequently quoted book both in the New Testament and in the Mishna, the oral laws codified by the Pharisees. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is the most frequently copied prophetic book. In its early days, there appears to have been freedom to modify and add to the book. Indeed, the Talmud indicates Isaiah was written by Isaiah and "the men of Hezekiah."

In the medieval period of the 11th century, Ibn Ezra, "the first Jewish Bible critic," raised questions about the audience and events of Isaiah. He noted the writings span a century and a half and suggested there are passages from another hand. Since the early 19th century, scholars have recognized the book of Isaiah speaks to different cultural experiences: Isaiah 1-39, period of Assyrian dominance; Isaiah 40-55, Babylonian period; and Isaiah 56-60, period of Persian dominance and the return and restoration. Though each of these sections refers to a different time and circumstance, Isaiah has been given to us as a complete book.

Chapter 58 is part of the last section, sometimes called "Third" or "Trito" Isaiah. It refers to the time when the people of Israel had returned to the Land of Promise and faced a Jerusalem and Judah that had been devastated. There was a strong tendency to bargain with God.

The text begins with a call for the prophet to state loudly and clearly that the people are on the wrong track. Although outward appearances suggest a faithful people, they are, instead, rebellious for they fail to practise righteousness.

They complain that God does not hear:

> "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" (Isaiah 58:3).

God's response is that their fasting is only self-serving, an effort to appease God at the expense of their workers who are oppressed. Fasting was a way of protecting their vested interests rather than as an aid to the practice of righteousness.

But what is righteousness (Hebrew, *saddiq, sedaqah*)? That is, what does God require of his people? What is the substance rather than the form of faith?

In general, "righteousness" has to do with a capacity to imagine and rehearse a future in which hope abounds. It is care for the poor and needy. It is the capacity to be embarrassed at what is and to blush over mistakes, failure and sin. It is to recognize that God is congenial to what may be rather than to what is. Righteousness, not economic considerations, is the "bottom line" in our relationship to God and to others.

There is much more that could be said. In *Hope Within History*, Walter Brueggemann helpfully notes several of the many-faceted meanings of the biblical use of "righteousness":

(1) First, righteousness is a "mark of God's godness." Human righteousness is derived from and reflective of the righteousness of God.

(2) Righteousness is a moral category: obedience with a social conscience.

(3) Righteousness means an intense concern for the "quality and character of human interaction."

(4) Righteousness is "promissory, anticipatory, and eschatological," placing the person on the side of hope rather than despair or acquiescence.

(5) In summary, righteousness is the power to give life.

The fast of the people was the very opposite of the righteousness that God sought for and from his people. A fast that was marked by sackcloth and ashes and with heads drooped "like a bulrush" simply did not counter or displace the reality of the harm done to others (verses 4-5).

What kind of worship is acceptable to God? What kind of Ash Wednesday or, indeed, any Wednesday does God respond to favourably? The direction is clear: sharing bread with the hungry, inviting the homeless to our homes, clothing the naked and helping the afflicted.

The people were accused of a Sabbath observance that, instead of honouring God (a sign of loyalty), served the self-interest (primarily business interests) of the people (verse 13). Brueggemann (*Finally Comes the Poet*) observes that "Sabbath means desisting from the frantic pursuit of securing the world on our own terms. In that ancient society, as in ours, the practice of acquisitiveness — whether of things, power, or leisure — constitutes resistance to Sabbath."

Righteous worship looks like the proper way to get God's attention. R

For discussion and reflection

- Compare Isaiah 58 to Jesus' words in Matthew 25:31-46.
- How much of your worship is based on self-interest and the market-place?
- What does proper Sabbath observance mean when you compare Isaiah 58:13 with Mark 2:23-28 and parallels in Matthew 12:1-14 and Luke 6:1-11?

L. E. (Ted) Siverns is the minister of First Church in New Westminster, B.C.

Catherine Walker-Stol

Landlords
can teach us many things

My landlord smoked, occasionally drank Scotch and worked on the city's garbage trucks. He introduced me to the family dog and Wanda, my new room-mate

When I was 25, I returned to university for my Bachelor of Education degree. But, halfway through my studies, my clergy husband received a call to a congregation several hours away from the university. Suddenly, we needed to find accommodation for me for the following year's studies.

Too late for a space in residence, I called a Presbyterian minister near the university. I thought he might know of a home for a low-maintenance boarder. He put me in touch with a couple who had some space. A teenage girl was living with them while her parents were abroad. The girl was a bit rebellious and, no doubt, a Presbyterian minister's wife would be a positive influence. For only $350 each month, I could have a room, two meals a day, be within walking distance of the school and share a bathroom and sitting room with a teenager. I took it, sight unseen.

Well, we were within walking distance for an ambitious hiker. The sitting room and its furniture were dark. Trevor, the owners' eight-year-old son, played Nintendo. But Herb, the landlord, was friendly. He smoked, occasionally drank Scotch and worked on the city's garbage trucks. He introduced me to the family dog and to Wanda, my new room-mate.

Much later, when I was hungry and grouchy, dinner was ready in the small, cluttered kitchen. It smelled delicious. A large spinach salad was in the middle of the table, and a pasta dish bubbled in the oven. Herb put two bottles of salad dressing on the table.

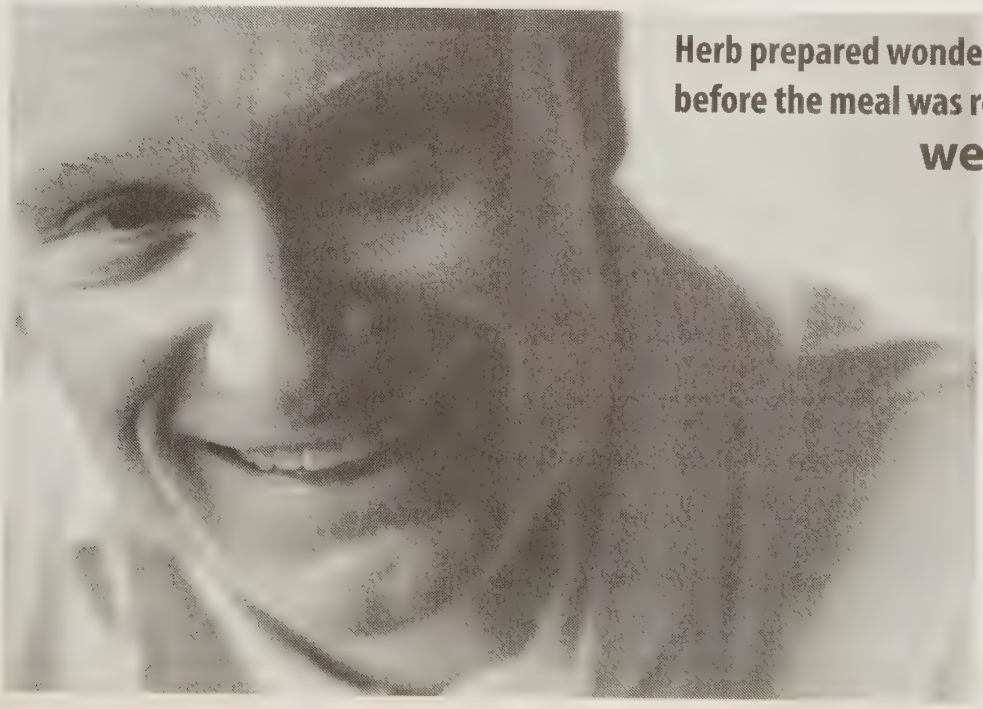
"Do you like peach pie?" he asked. "I made one right after work."

"Sounds delicious."

Over dinner, Herb told Clara, his working wife, he had bought a new bed for Trevor and a car. "It might look beat up," he said, "but it purrs like a kitten." These were bought with my first month's rent and damage deposit, a total of $450.

I quickly fell into a comfortable routine at university. Students, professors, courses and my room-mates were interesting. I drove home to my husband on weekends.

We visited only during dinner. Herb prepared wonderful meals. He would call us long before the meal was ready, and we talked about our day. Wanda told about interesting things from school, and I soon found the interaction between



Herb prepared wonderful meals. He would call us long before the meal was ready, and
we talked about our day

Herb and Clara with Wanda deserving of attention. Sometimes, they would simply let her talk, agreeing, questioning. Or they might listen more intently, challenging her decisions. Sometimes, she was rude, almost belligerent. Occasionally, she agreed with them.

Wanda played her music loudly. She thought I studied an awful lot. Her goals and career plans changed almost daily. Any positive influence from me would simply have to rub off on her. I bit my tongue and smiled.

Our hosts were finding Wanda more

of a challenge. She had been a passenger in a stolen car and was brought home by police. They were sure she was drinking.

When I returned after a teaching practicum, the kindness of Herb and Clara had been extended to another girl, Julie. Clara had met her at a coffee shop. She had been homeless, but wasn't anymore.

My admiration for Clara and Herb was clouded at having to share space with yet another person. That had not been part of the bargain! But I said nothing.

On my last night before leaving for home, Herb thanked me for being patient with Wanda and Julie. He knew it had not been easy for me with their stories, music and sloppy habits.

"No problem," I said. "It was nothing."

Years later, my husband was asked to assist a young woman in finding her birth mother who lived in our city. He would be the middle person to deliver some correspondence. He made the necessary contact and, as he met with Ruth and her husband in our home, I heard little conversation but some sobs. I was moved by the enormity of what had happened.

Still later, a young woman at our church seemed familiar to me. When I heard her laugh, I knew it was Wanda. Smart, professional, employed. We talked together, and I told her how pleased Herb and Clara would be if she contacted them. She said she would do so.

"What brings you here?" I asked.

"I wanted to meet and thank the minister who brought my mother and me together," she said. "It has been an awesome event in our lives, and now I have this whole new family to love along with the one I had before."

I am thankful my husband could help them. I am thankful that, years earlier, I had at least been polite to Wanda. I really did nothing else.

I learned that God uses *whoever* he wants to do *whatever* he wants. And, now, whatever the outward appearance, I try not to judge. A person might have something precious like Herb and Clara had — hearts of gold. R

Catherine Walker-Stol attends Westmount Church in London, Ont., where her husband, Michael, is the minister.

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Matthew Brough

Should we use worship to "attract" young people?

Above all, worship requires integrity and sincerity

Congregations continue to struggle to figure out why so few young people attend church and how they can reach youth today. Much of the debate around this issue focuses on the style and format of the worship service. Words such as contemporary, traditional, blended, evangelical and even fundamentalist, liberal and conservative, or the ever-popular Presbyterian are used as adjectives to describe particular styles of worship that congregations engage in week after week.

Before jumping with both feet into the endless debate of whether we should change the worship style to "appeal to youth" and, if so, how to do that, we need to ask ourselves, What is worship? Should worship be used to reach those outside our community? Should we introduce drums and guitars simply to attract youth? Should we introduce drama so young people will begin lining up to get into the sanctuary? Should we scrap the hymn-books and use PowerPoint presentations to dazzle the eyes of the TV, film, video game and Net generation? Should we introduce these things because we need to get with the times and entertain the youth with the hope of reaching them with the message?

Youth will be attracted to a congregation whose members (young and old) know who they are, what they believe and why they worship the way they do

I believe we must start by being honest about what we do when we worship God. Is worship simply singing songs and listening to the "hired help" spout on about love and peace? No! First and foremost, we offer our thanks and praise to God. Is this evident in our worship services? Worship should be the best expression of the entire community of faith's response to God. Only after we know what we are doing when we worship can we begin to think about how we can express our thanks and praise in the best way possible.

No one style will work everywhere. More than style, what is needed in the worship services of the Presbyterian Church is honesty and sincerity. Do we sing "O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant" at Christmastime because we are truly joyful about Jesus Christ coming into the world or simply because it is the next hymn listed in the bulletin? Being sincere in worship can often mean being enthusiastic and energetic since we are responding to the unimaginable love that God has shown and given us. But worship should also be majestic to witness to the awe that God inspires in us. Worship can also be quiet and simple to show that we must listen to God.

I remember going to church on Good Friday with my family. Every year, we sang "Beneath the cross of Jesus." Partway through the second verse, my mother would break into tears. Others



"Yes, there are many names for God, but 'Bucko' isn't one of them!"

around us sang as if this were a hymn of joy, some didn't sing at all, and most mumbled the words as if reading the newspaper to themselves. Perhaps they all meant what they sang but had trouble showing it. But I knew what my mother felt. Her sincerity told me Jesus' death was awful, painful and upsetting. I never would have guessed that from most people's reaction. Being sincere in worship is about embracing both the joy and the pain of the Christian story of which we are all a part.

Changing the worship style and format should take place only to assist the assembled community of faith to find ways to connect with God and the Christian story and to be as sincere as they can be when they worship. If the style or format of worship hinders the true worship of God, then it should be changed.

Congregations should be cautious about making changes simply to attract young people. Youth need honesty and sincerity. If drums and guitars and drama help the congregation be sincere in worshipping God, if drums and guitars help the whole assembly connect with God, then certainly adopt those forms of worship. If a "traditional" choir with organ or piano helps in this same way, then adopt that form. If both help, then find a way to have both. If neither helps, then find some alternative.

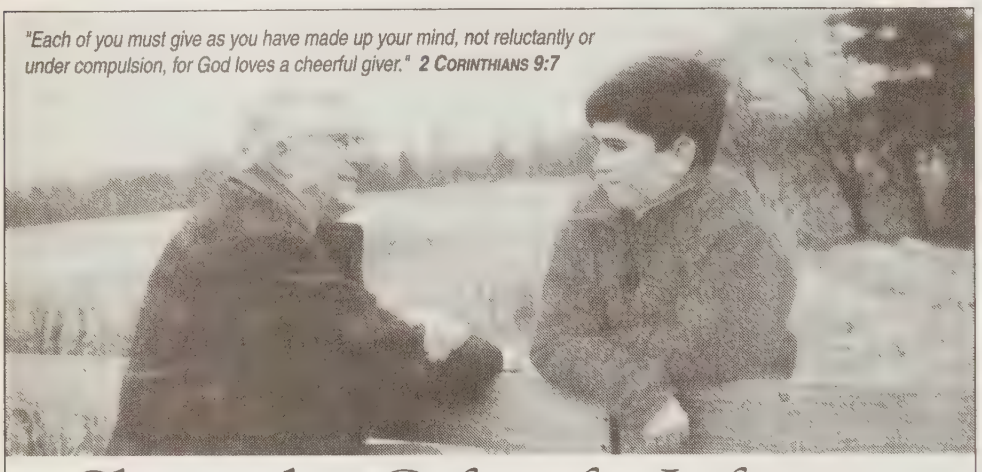
Some young people may be impressed with flashy light shows, electric guitars and things like that, but I believe young people are looking for a place where they can be themselves and be loved for who they are. Youth will be attracted to a congregation whose members (young and old) know who they are, what they believe and why they worship the way they do. If honesty and sincerity abound in a congregation, young people will feel comfortable to be honest and sincere. If youth see others in church who seem to ignore the sermon or not sing the songs, how can we expect them to want to be there? R

Matthew Brough is studying part time in the M.Div. program at Vancouver School of Theology and is the co-ordinator of Internet education for the St. Andrew's Hall Institute for Elders' Education in Vancouver.

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Al Rempel

Plunging into Presbyterianism

How I became one of Presbyterian's adopted sons

I am a life-long Christian, born into a faithful Mennonite-Evangelical home. About the time I was finishing a B.Sc. degree in physics, I realized I was abandoning this particular faith paradigm. I could no longer read the publications that represented it. The questions asked were not my questions. The answers, whether stated dogmatically or tentatively, seemed irrelevant. In moving toward the unknown, I landed, surprisingly, in the Presbyterian camp.

In retrospect, it was an odd transition. Even halfway through university, I was still actively involved in a Mennonite dialogue on community. I lived in a dorm that encouraged communal living. I also corresponded with a friend in India. We struggled together to define what it meant for us to be the church. At the same time, I disparaged all formal ritual in true Mennonite fashion.

I still embrace some Mennonite-Evangelical ideas. I still highly value community and live with a group now in intentional community. I still view violence as the worst option in any situation and am a pacifist. Many such ideals are not at odds with Presbyterian belief. I still believe in the "priesthood of all believers" and continue to see the teachings of Christ as a kind of "canon within a canon." The Evangelical emphasis on Scripture has stood me in good stead.

How did this conversion experience begin? I had adhered to a rational Christianity that had been tested by reason and logic, but not by non-linear thought. From a renewed interest in literature, while studying physics, I began a slow confrontation with my early faith understanding. Some new experiences at university eased my entry into the Presbyterian Church. I had begun to use liturgical forms that arose from immersing myself in the poetry of the Old Testament prophets and the book of Revelation. Evangelical Christianity's obsession with proving God's existence no longer seemed appropriate, viable or realistic. Through a dream, I came to realize that, while some people might turn to God through chain-link logic, they could as easily turn through the beauty of art.

The Presbyterian services attracted me with the texture of their liturgy

The conservative ethics of my background also came into play. Through the eyes of a friend, I came to recognize beauty in all areas of life — from delight in good food and drink, to well-made furniture and well-designed buildings, to the inspiring creations of God in nature. This goodness spills over the strict limits of righteousness and unrighteousness understood by Mennonite-Evangelicals who tend to posit goodness in heaven and are ambivalent about goodness on earth. Despite their strengths, the reluctance of Mennonites and other Evangelicals to mix church and state leads to shallowness when issues involving engagement with the world arise. Depth of thought seems confined to issues of church alone.

I saw my branch of Mennonites becoming increasingly absorbed by Evangelical Christianity. This was probably the last straw. I sought another church. For one summer, I visited a variety of churches. To my amazement, all the Evangelical churches seemed to be copies of each other, and local variations were overridden by their common culture. This was easiest to see in the Sunday services, which now seem flat to me — consisting of only singing and preaching. In contrast, the Presbyterian services attracted me with the texture of their liturgy.

In the end, this held me: the poetry of each service that keeps my spirit laughing with God's Spirit, as well as the depth of thought that comes from wrestling with the issues of the world. It was certainly not our "upbeat" service at St. Giles Presbyterian Church in Prince George, British Columbia, or how contemporary the services are, or a culture of friendly invites to lunch that I grew up with, and miss. It was, rather, the rituals and movements of the liturgy that offer opportunities for the sacred to break into the mundane hues of our lives.

Some day, maybe, I will be less critical of my heritage and more critical of Presbyterians. Maybe my spiritual toes won't curl and cringe in an Evangelical service. Maybe, at my Presbyterian church, I will notice more people inviting others to lunch. Maybe we'll discover the importance of close community and seek to live in it. Maybe God's Kingdom will break in on our lives in glorious fullness. Maybe, then, we will all sit back and laugh at our petty differences. R

Al Rempel is a substitute teacher in Prince George, B.C., who exercises his part in the priesthood of all believers by serving at St. Giles as an elder, the guiding light of Al's Pals, a young adult group, and, occasionally, preaching.

people & places



TWO STAINED GLASS WINDOWS were dedicated at St. Andrew's Church, Cardigan, P.E.I., in memory of past generations of the MacPherson, MacDonald, MacLaren and Shaw families. Members of the Shaw family — Adele (Shaw) Webster and her granddaughter, Jessica Webster; and Marina (Shaw) Myers and her granddaughter, Kimberly Myers — presented the windows. Pictured with them is Rev. Daphne Blaxland (centre).

AS PART OF HER farewell gift, a piece of stained glass art was presented to Rev. Rosemary Doran upon her retirement from the ministry. Dick Carey, clerk of session of Riverside Church, Windsor, Ont., made the presentation.





A SPECIAL HISTORICAL SERVICE was one of ways the congregation of Erindale Church, Mississauga, Ont., celebrated the 2000th birthday of Christ, the Year of Jubilee and the 125th anniversary of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Rev. Art Van Seters, Moderator of the 125th General Assembly, was the guest speaker. Other events during the year included: a historical display, the anniversary of the congregation's first service, the publication of a church history journal, and the 40th anniversary of the church. Organist Aury Murray is pictured playing an antique pump organ during the historical service.



THE CAPE BRETON PRESBYTERIAL of the Atlantic Mission Society held a mission fair at St. Andrew's Church, Sydney Mines, N.S., as its contribution to the *Celebrate!* year. Displays and guest speakers, J. F. Beauchesne of PWS&D and former missionaries Donald MacKay and Georgine Caldwell, described the work of the Presbyterian Church at home and overseas. There were also videos on Cuba, the Francisca Coll School in Guatemala, *Presbyterians Sharing...* and PWS&D. Another highlight was the 21 flags hanging from the ceiling in the church hall. Made by children in the presbytery to represent the countries where The Presbyterian Church in Canada has workers, each flag was featured in turn, with information given about the country it represented. Of course, food is always popular at fairs. Visitors could sample ethnic dishes from some of the countries where the church has workers, as well as local specialties such as oatcakes, tea biscuits and bannock.



THE ANNUAL FALL RETREAT for students, staff and faculty at The Presbyterian College, Montreal, was held Sept. 8-9 at Val Morin, Que. The theme for the weekend was Christian Spirituality and Theological Education. The guest speaker was Glenn Smith of Christian Direction, Montreal.

Please note: Photos submitted for People & Places must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they are to be returned. Also, please try to ensure all pictures are clear and do not include a multitude of people. Colour or black-and-white photos are acceptable, but negatives and slides cannot be used. Thank you.

2000 ARK AVENUE was the place to be during the vacation Bible school held by St. David's Church, Toney River, N.S. The children "hooted and hollered, and played and prayed with God's family." A couple of God's creatures can be seen in the front row.

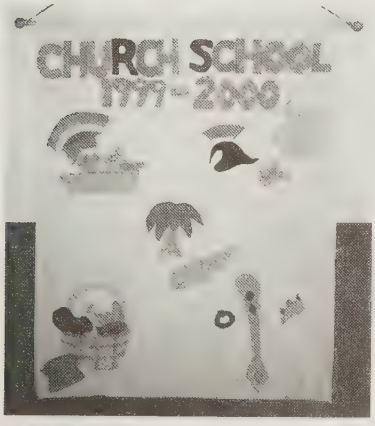




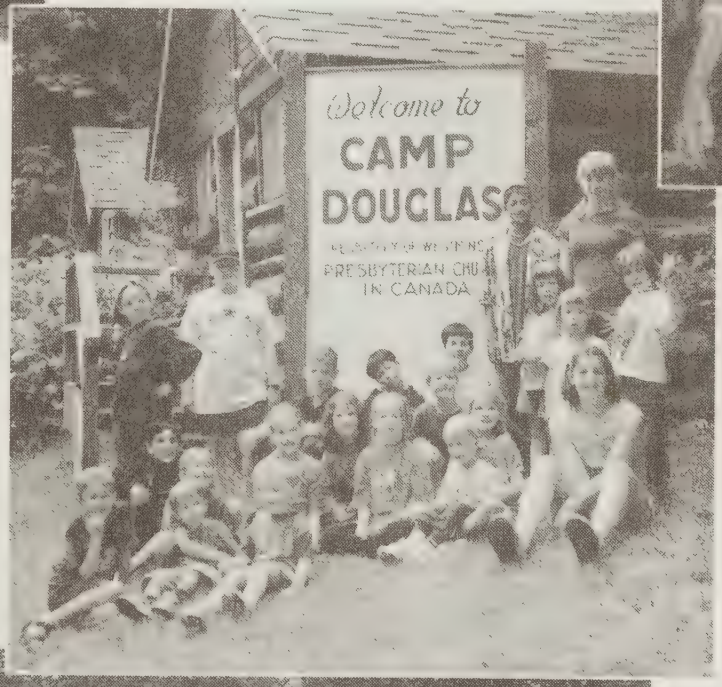
THIRTY CHILDREN and 11 youth and parent volunteers participated in a "Veggie Tales" vacation Bible school held at Amberlea Church, Pickering, Ont. Each day began with a Veggie Tales video, followed by song-time led by Rev. Morley Mitchell, crafts, games and a Bible story.

RUBY LOGAN-VENCTA'S 100th birthday was celebrated at a party given by Knox Church, Ottawa, on August 5. The next day, she was honoured at a reception following the Sunday morning service at St. Giles Church, Ottawa. Family gathered from as far away as Vancouver and Edinburgh, and official greetings were received from the Queen, the Governor General, the prime minister and the Presbytery of Ottawa. Ruby still attends Knox Church on most Sundays.

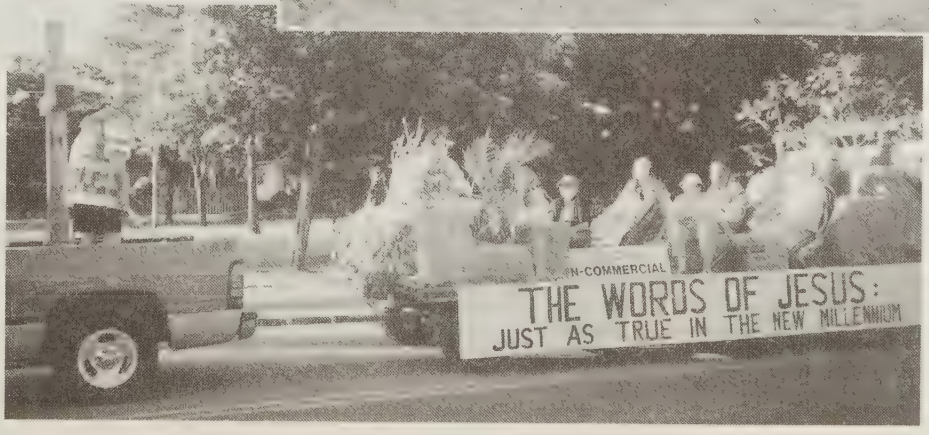




THE CHURCH SCHOOL OF First Church, Edmonton, used the workshop rotation model for its 1999-2000 school program, studying five Bible stories over the course of the year. To mark the occasion, the children constructed a banner featuring a symbol for each of the five stories: Noah's Ark, David and Goliath, Jesus feeds the 5,000, Esther, and Jonah and the whale.



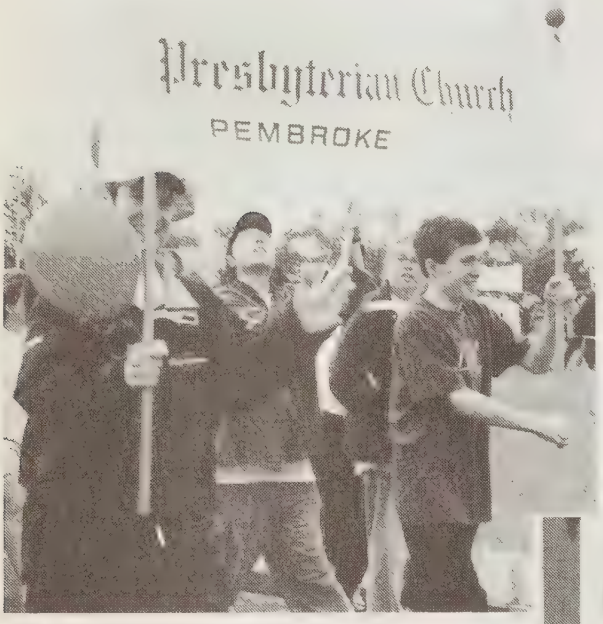
NINE FAMILIES FROM Richmond Church, Richmond, B.C., travelled to Camp Douglas for a weekend family retreat last summer. Thanks to an "Adopt-a-Cabin" program, the camp has seen many improvements, and there has been an increase in the number of campers over the past few years.



EVERY AUGUST, Alliston, Ontario, the potato capital of Canada, holds a 2 1/2-hour Potato Festival Parade watched by thousands. Last year, for the first time, all 10 Alliston churches took part. Knox Church won second prize for its float depicting a slightly revised scene from the Mount of Beatitudes.



CAMPERS SET OUT from Gracefield Camp, north of Ottawa, on a three-day canoe trip using the eight new tripping canoes purchased through fund-raising efforts (including the sale of Lenten devotional booklets with reflections by former Moderator William Klempa).



A 15-MEMBER RELAY TEAM from First Church, Pembroke, Ont., raised almost $1,600 at Relay for Life, a fund-raising event held by the Canadian Cancer Society at CFB Petawawa last year. Over $125,000 was raised in pledges by 67 teams. Approximately 2,200 luminaries (candles in a bag) were purchased in honour of cancer victims and lit up Dundonald Hall Track in the evening.

THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF Knox Church, Winnipegosis, Man., was celebrated last year with an open house, an anniversary service and a dinner. Rev. David Wilson, clerk of the Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, conducted the service. In the choir were many former Sunday school pupils, some of whom had come from British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Pictured (L to R) are elders: Onie Giggins (organist for 50 years), Numi Stefanson and Edna Medd.



KRISTY GARTON of St. Andrew's Church, Thunder Bay, Ont., was the first recipient of the Lieutenant-Governor's Community Volunteer Award at last June's graduation at Winston Churchill CVI. Much of Kristy's community service stems from her active participation in the church's youth group.





THE WOMEN OF Eden Mills Church, Guelph, Ont., initiated a millennium signature quilt project. The sewers, (L to R) Donna Henry, Marion Tubman and Elizabeth Patterson (convener), are pictured with Rev. Linda Paquette.



ROSES WERE PRESENTED to two longtime members of Sand Hill Church, Seeley's Bay, Ont., on the occasion of the congregation's 138th anniversary. Pictured with Lillian Whyte, honoured for 65 years of active membership, is clerk of session Sam Nuttall. Mabel Scott, who was unable to attend, was recognized for 60 years of active membership.

The Sikhs *by Patwant Singh (Knopf/Random House, 2000, $39.95). Reviewed by Peter Bush.*

This is a history of the Sikhs from 1469 until the present, written by a highly committed and articulate believer in the Sikh faith. It is an account of the people and events, the places and battles that have made the Sikhs who they are. It is not a systematic description of what Sikhs believe or a description of the various branches of the Sikh faith.

There is much that people unfamiliar with Sikhs can learn from reading this book, including: why most Sikhs share the name Singh, the significance of the temple at Amritsar, and the religious significance of the distinctive Sikh characteristics of the kirpan and the turban. The book is a robust defence of Sikhs. Singh concludes: "The achievements and adversities of their history have produced a compelling optimism which has helped them emerge stronger after each trial. This quality has served the Sikhs admirably over the centuries, as it will in the centuries to come."

Peter Bush is minister of Knox Church in Mitchell, Ont.

The Troubling Story of the World's Most Famous Passion Play *by James Shapiro (Pantheon, 2000, $37). Reviewed by Zander Dunn.*

James Shapiro, professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University and author of *Shakespeare and the Jews*, is Jewish. I expected this book to be a bitter analysis of the anti-Semitism of the Passion Play of Oberammergau in Germany. Instead, Shapiro is sympathetic to the Christian play and even writes of how parts of the play moved him.

This book is worth reading for three reasons. First, it documents the many changes that have been made in the play over the years. Anyone who thinks there is such a thing as *the* Passion Play in Oberammergau will be amazed to read of the ways in which the play has been reworked to mollify critics, satisfy the Roman Catholic Church and adjust to the advances in biblical studies. And the play will change in the future. There never will be a definitive Oberammergau Passion Play.

Second, this book is valuable because it identifies the anti-Semitism that has plagued the play through the centuries. Of course, it has been argued the play is based on the Gospel records in the New Testament and, if the play is anti-Semitic, it is because the New Testament is anti-Semitic. It is true there are parts of the New Testament that are anti-Semitic, but many agree that does not justify perpetuating salacious racial stereotypes. Unfortunately, others argue the play must remain faithful to the literal words of the New Testament even when they malign the Jews, of whom Jesus was one. Many of the "dirty" parts of the play have been

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removed but there remain enough anti-Semitic references and innuendoes to alarm men and women who want to see the play as a means of proclaiming God's love, not hatred against God's people.

The third reason to read this book is because it tells about the men and women who have produced, directed and acted in the play. The play is performed every 10 years to fulfil a vow made in 1634 to God to perform such a play in gratitude for saving the town from the plague. Almost half of Oberammergau's 5,200 citizens perform in the play, but no Jew has ever had a part. The play has promoted anti-Semitism, and Hitler praised it as a brilliant exposé of the Jews as bloodthirsty and treacherous villains who conspired to kill the Christ. In the cast of the 1934 edition of the play, there were 152 Nazi party members. The man who played Jesus, eight of his Twelve Apostles, and the woman who played Mary were all Nazis. Ironically, only the man who played Judas was known to have been a "strong anti-Nazi."

In 1998, the villagers voted to let reformers rather than traditionalists direct the Passion Play in the year 2000. The reformers were also interested in ridding the play of its anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, they failed. And, yet, the author was impressed with the attempts, with the dedication of the actors and with the power of the play itself. Maybe next time.

Zander Dunn, in retirement, ministers part time at St. Paul's Church, Amherst Island, Ont.

Most books reviewed may be purchased through The Book Room, 50 Wynford Dr., North York, Ont. M3C 1J7. Prices include shipping and handling but not GST. Do not send payment with order. An invoice will follow. Please include name and location of congregation. Toll-free order line: 1-800-619-7301, ext. 301, e-mail: bookroom@presbyterian.ca.

Check out the *Record*'s children's page on page 50. Then link to more activities online! Go to **www.presbyterian.ca/record** and click on **Called to wonder**.

Millennium quilt exhibit

February 8 - 28
St. Andrew's Church, Calgary

DEATHS

CLIFTON, REV. ERNEST (LLOYD) HOCKEY, PhmB, of RR 3, Kerwood, Ontario, died at the Strathroy-Middlesex General Hospital on November 13, 2000, in his 82nd year.

Son of the late Rev. E.S. Clifton and Kathleen Hockey, Lloyd graduated from the Ontario College of Pharmacy in 1943 and practised in Simcoe and Ingersoll, Ont. He was general manager of Baxter Laboratories and Hollinghead of Canada. He was a founding member of the board of directors, past president and honorary member of Canadian Manufacturers of Chemical Specialties (CMCS). For 25 years, he was honorary director of Alcohol and Drug Concerns of Canada. He was a member of the Lions Club for 52 years — past president of the Mount Forest Lions Club and honorary member of the Strathroy Lions Club. He was life member of Lions International.

Lloyd was ordained to the Word and Sacraments of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1970. He served churches in Sutton, Hamilton and Mount Forest.

Survived by his wife of 57 years, Evelyn (Fletcher) Clifton. Dear father of Rev. Lloyd Clifton and his wife, Carol Ann, of Sunderland, Ont., Beth Anne Yando and her husband, George, of Prince Albert, Sask., and Janet Meusters and her husband, Richard, of Brampton, Ont. Also survived by his five grandchildren: Carrie and Lloyd Clifton of Sunderland, Geordie and Beth Yando of Prince Albert and Katerina of Brampton.

Visitation was at the Denning Bros. Funeral Home, Strathroy, on Thursday, Nov. 16. Services were conducted by Rev. Doug Miles on Friday, Nov. 17, at 1:30 p.m., at the West Adelaide Presbyterian Church. Interment followed in West Adelaide Cemetery.

FINDLAY, LESLIE, M.Y., died suddenly on Nov. 9, 2000, in his 64th year. Funeral service from Knox Presbyterian Church, Harrington, Ont. He will be greatly missed by his family, friends and community.

GILCHRIST, DUNCAN A., 91, longtime member, senior elder, trustee and former manager of Knox, West Lorne, Ont., Oct. 5, 2000.

HAUGHTON, FLORENCE, of St. David's Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, Ont., passed away suddenly at home on Friday, Oct. 27, 2000. She was church treasurer and member of the board of managers for 23 years. She was a member of St. David's for more than 55 years. Her interests included youth work and the care of the church building.

McFADDEN, WILLIAM ROSS, 80, longtime member of Knox Presbyterian Church, Grand Valley, Ont., Nov. 21, 2000.

NEWSON, FLOYD KENNETH, 72, longtime active member, ordained elder 1955 in Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, to follow in Knox Presbyterian Church, Grand Valley, Ont., Dec. 11, 2000.

NICHOL, WILFRED, 82, longtime faithful member, choir member and elder of Knox Presbyterian Church, Sudbury, Ont., on Nov. 20, 2000.

WOODLEY, JOHN MAXWELL "JACK," on Dec. 3, 2000, in his 83rd year. Jack was a lifelong, faithful member and elder of Knox Presbyterian Church, Dundas, Ont. A friend and inspiration to all.

ORDINATIONS

McDonald, Rev. Ian A.R., Presbytery of Halifax and Lunenburg, St. Andrew's, Dartmouth, N.S., Nov. 30, 2000.

INDUCTIONS and RECOGNITIONS

Lampman, Rev. Wendy, Knox, Tiverton, Ont., Sept. 17.

Spencer, Rev. Dr. Robert C., interim minister, St. Andrew's, Fergus, Ont., Dec. 5, 2000.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES and INTERIM MODERATORS

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Bathurst, N.B., St. Luke's. Rev. John Crawford, 7 Hierlihy Rd., Tabusintac, N.B. E9H 1Y5.

Charlottetown, Zion (assistant minister). Rev. Steven Stead, RR 4, Montague, P.E.I. C0A 1R0.

Hanwell, N.B., St. James. Rev. Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1M2; 506-455-8220; sapc@nbnet.nb.ca.

Merigomish, N.S., St. Paul's; French River. Rev. Charles McPherson, Box 132, Stellarton, N.S. B0K 1S0.

Miramichi, N.B., St. James. Rev. Philip Crowell, 206 Wellington St., Miramichi, N.B. E1N 1M7.

New Glasgow, N.S., St. Andrew's. Rev. Iona MacLean, Box 1003, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0; ionamac@auracom.com; 902-485-4298.

Riverview, N.B., Bethel. Rev. Martin Kreplin, 90 Park St., Moncton, N.B. E1C 2B3.

Saint John, N.B., St. Columba. Rev. Ted Thompson, 101 Coburg St., Saint John, N.B. E2L 3B7; 506-634-7765.

Scotsburn, N.S., Bethel; Earltown, Knox; West Branch, Burns Memorial. Rev. Jeanette Fleischer, Box 142, River John, N.S. B0K 1N0; 902-351-2777; jen.fleisch@ns.sympatico.ca.

Springhill, N.S., St. David's; Oxford, St. James; Riverview, St. Andrew's. Rev. Kevin Steeper, RR 2, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0; 902-485-8944; thesteepers@auracom.com.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Fort-Coulonge, Que., St. Andrew's; Bristol, Bristol Memorial. Rev. Milton A. Fraser, 80 Daniel St. N, Arnprior, Ont. K7S 2K8; 613-623-5531; standrew@storm.ca.

Montreal, Robert Campbell Taiwanese (half-time English/Taiwanese bilingual assistant). Rev. Harry Kuntz, 92 Rockwyn Ave., Pointe Claire, Que. H9R 1W2.

Mount Royal, a suburb of Montreal (part time). Rev. Peter Szabo, 7110 de l'Epée, Montreal, Que. H3N 2E1.

Nepean, Ont., Parkwood (effective July 1, 2001). Rev. J.H.W. Statham, 1220 Old Tenth Line Rd., Orleans, Ont. K1E 3W7.

Ottawa, Westminster. Rev. Alex Mitchell, 2400 Alta Vista Dr., Ottawa, Ont. K1H 7N1.

Pierrefonds, Que., Westminster (part time). Search Committee Convener, Mr. Elias Saikaly, 4373 Elgin, Pierrefonds, Que. H9H 1T9; e_saikaly@hotmail.com.

Smiths Falls, Ont., Westminster. Rev. Milton A. Fraser, 80 Daniel St. N, Arnprior, Ont. K7S 2K8; 613-623-5531; standrew@storm.ca.

Synod of Toronto and Kingston

Ajax, St. Andrew's. Rev. E.J. Briard, 255 Wright Cres., Ajax, Ont. L1S 5S5.

Arthur, St. Andrew's; Gordonville, St. Andrew's. Rev. J. Johnson, Box 133, Drayton, Ont. N0G 1P0; 519-343-3201.

Cambridge, Central. Rev. Mark Richardson, 10 Zeller Dr., Kitchener, Ont. N2A 4A8; kepc@golden.net.

Cambridge, St. Andrew's Hespeler. Rev. Wayne Dawes, 2 Grand Ave. S, Cambridge, Ont. N1S 2L2.

Colborne, Old St. Andrew's; Brighton, St. Andrew's. Rev. Doug Brown, 200 King St. W, Cobourg, Ont. K9A 2N1.

Erin, Burns; Ospringe, Knox. Rev. Gerald Rennie, 67 Churchill Rd. N, Acton, Ont. L7J 2H9; gerald.rennie@sympatico.ca.

Etobicoke, Mimico. Rev. Susanne Rescorl, 680 Annette St., Toronto, Ont. M6S 2C8; 416-767-2689; fax 416-767-1229.

Fergus, St. Andrew's. Rev. Linda Bell, 2 Cross St., Elmira, Ont. N3B 2S4; drbell@execulink.com.

Guelph, St. Andrew's. Rev. William Johnston, 54 Queen St. N, Kitchener, Ont. N2H 2H2.

The Transitions column welcomes announcements of special events such as births, marriages, anniversaries, graduations, baptisms and the reception of new members, as well as death notices. The rate is $1 per word or $50 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.
All notices of pulpit vacancies, recognitions, ordinations and inductions will be charged to the congregation: $10 for the basic notice and $1 per word for additional information. (There will be no charge to congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.)
Contact the *Record* office regarding all items for the Transitions column.

Maple, St. Andrew's. Rev. Bryn MacPhail, Box 164, 19 Stewart St., Beeton, Ont. L0G 1A0; 905-729-0055; bmacphal@netrover.com.

Markham, Chapel Place. Rev. George Beals, 10058 Yonge St., Richmond Hill, Ont. L4C 1T8. Potential candidates must have an intimate knowledge of Middle Eastern culture and be thoroughly fluent in Arabic and English.

Nobleton, St. Paul's. Rev. Sam Priestley, 143 Main St. N, Markham, Ont. L3P 1Y2.

Orillia, Orillia (St. Andrew's), (effective Sept./Oct. 2001). Rev. Donald McKillican, 99 Peter St. N, Orillia, Ont. L3V 4Z3.

Oshawa, Knox. Rev. Lois Whitwell, The Search Committee, 147 Simcoe St. N, Oshawa, Ont. L1J 4S6; gorddi@durham.net.

Port Carling, Knox; Torrance, Zion. Rev. Michael Barnes, 45 McMurray St., Bracebridge, Ont. P1L 2A1; 705-645-4521.

Puslinch, Duff's; Crieff, Knox. Rev. Don McCallum, 795 Scottsdale Dr., Guelph, Ont. N1G 3R8.

Sudbury, Hillside-Knox pastoral charge. Rev. Dan Reeves, 1114 Auger St., Sudbury, Ont. P3A 4B2; 705-566-0652; calvinpc@hotmail.com.

Toronto, Calvin. Rev. G. Cameron Brett, 75 Simcoe St., Toronto, Ont. M5J 1W9; cbrett@standrewstoronto.org.

Toronto, Malvern. Rev. Duncan Cameron, 115 St. Andrews Rd., Toronto, Ont. M1P 4N2; d.cameron@sympatico.ca.

Toronto, Patterson. Rev. Gordon Fish, 15 Lambeth Rd., Toronto, Ont. M9A 2Y6.

Toronto, St. Giles Kingsway. Rev. John Borthwick, 2314 Islington Ave., Toronto, Ont. M9W 5W9; 416-741-1530; barley.is@home.com.

Toronto, Trinity York Mills. Rev. John Congram, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, Ont. M3C 1J7; jcongram@presbyterian.ca.

Tweed, St. Andrew's. Rev. A.D. MacLeod, 16 Marmora St., Trenton, Ont. K8V 2H5.

Unionville, Unionville Church. Rev. Robert Smith, 271 Centre St., Thornhill, Ont. L4J 1G5; tpchurch@aims.on.ca.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Beechwood, St. Andrew's; Centre Road, Knox; Kerwood, West Adelaide. Rev. Kristine O'Brien, 152 Albert St., Strathroy, Ont. N7G 1V5; kristine@golden.net.

Listowel, Knox. Rev. Nicholas Vandermey, Box 663, Seaforth, Ont. N0K 1W0.

London, Elmwood Avenue. Rev. Andrew Human, 55 Hincks St., St. Thomas, Ont. N5R 3N9; revhuman@execulink.com.

London, Oakridge (associate minister). Rev. Terry Ingram, 862 Freele St., London, Ont. N6H 4G8; 519-471-2290; tingram@oakridge.london.on.ca.

London, St. Lawrence. Rev. Donald McInnis, 280 Oxford St. E, London, Ont. N6A 1V4.

Meaford, Knox. Rev. Bill Vanderstelt, Box 86, Chatsworth, Ont. N0H 1G0.

Milverton, Burns; North Mornington. Rev. Catherine Calkin, RR 2, St. Pauls, Ont. N0K 1V0.

Petrolia, St. Andrew's; Dawn, Knox. Rev. Philip Wilson, PO Box 1381, Corunna, Ont. N0N 1G0.

Point Edward, Point Edward Church (part time). Rev. James Sloan, 268 Dantiki Ct., Corunna, Ont. N0N 1G0.

Priceville, St. Andrew's (half-time). Rev. Scott Sinclair, 865 Second Ave. W, Owen Sound, Ont. N4K 4M6.

Stratford, Knox. Rev. Rick Horst, PO Box 247, St. Marys, Ont. N4X 1B1.

Sauble Beach, Huron Feathers Presbyterian Centre (director). Rev. Scott Sinclair, 865 Second Ave. W, Owen Sound, Ont. N4K 4M6.

Thamesville, St. James; Duart. Rev. Jack Neil, Box 1148, Ridgetown, Ont. N0P 2C0; 519-674-3487.

Windsor, Chinese (Cantonese-speaking, part time). Rev. Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9E 1Z5.

Windsor, Riverside. Rev. Jeff Loach, 405 Victoria Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9A 4N1; loach@jet2.net.

Windsor, Minister to begin a new outreach project near the University of Windsor Ontario. Rev. Hugh Appèl, Convener, Knox Presbyterian Church, 251 Duncan at Wellington, Wallaceburg, Ont. N8A 5G5; knox@kent.net.

Wyoming, St. Andrew's; Camlachie, Knox. Rev. Raymond Hodgson, 261 N. Christina St., Sarnia, Ont. N7T 5V4; 519-332-2662; raymond.hodgson@sympatico.ca.

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Kenora, Ont., First. Rev. Beth M. McCutcheon, 1476 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Man. R3G 0W3.

Thunder Bay, Ont., Calvin. Rev. Mark McLennan, 635 Grey St., Thunder Bay, Ont. P7E 2E4; markmac@lakehead.net.

Winnipeg, St. Andrew's-Calvin (joint charge seeking full-time minister). Rev. John Hogerwaard, 341 Eveline St. at McLean Ave., Selkirk, Man. R1A 1M9; 204-482-6425.

Synod of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, Calvin Goforth; McKercher Drive. Rev. Eric Muirhead, Box 1586, Melfort, Sask. S0E 1A0; emuirhead@sk.sympatico.ca.

Yorkton, Knox; Dunleath. Rev. Deborah Lannon, 2170 Albert St., Regina, Sask. S4P 2T9; dalfor@dlcwest.com.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Calgary, Centennial. Rev. David Vincent, 1102-23 Ave. NW, Calgary, Alta. T2M 1T7; Fax 403-220-9003; dvincent@nucleus.com.

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Calgary, Varsity Acres (co-minister). Rev. Dianne Ollerenshaw, 344 Coach Ridge Rise SW, Calgary, Alta. T3H 1G1; ollerend@cadvision.com; Web site: www.cadvision.com/vapc.

Medicine Hat, Riverside. Rev. Fiona Wilkinson, Box 566, Bassano, Alta. T0J 0B0; fax 403-641-4091; fiona@eidnet.org.

Synod of British Columbia

Burnaby, Gordon. Rev. Guy Sinclair, 2597 Bourquin Cres. E, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1Y6.

Castlegar, Grace. Rev. Doug Johns, Box 255, Creston, B.C. V0B 1G0; johnsy@kootenay.com.

New Westminster, Knox. Rev. Dr. J.H. (Hans) Kouwenberg, 2597 Bourquin Cres. E, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1Y6; calvinpres@telus.net.

Vancouver, Central. Rev. Bruce McAndless-Davis, 1320 7th Ave., New Westminster, B.C. V3M 2K1; 604-526-4914; fax 604-543-7597; bruce@staidans.bc.ca.

Victoria, St Andrew's (senior minister). Rev. Brian Crosby, 2770 Murray Dr., Victoria, B.C. V9A 2S5; phone/fax 250-361-9396; brian_crosby@telus.net.

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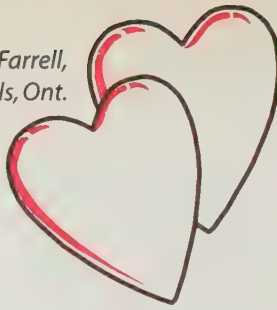
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called to wonder

Written by Jennifer O'Farrell,
St. Mark's Church, Don Mills, Ont.



Jesus said: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second most important commandment is this: 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself.' There is no other commandment more important than these two."
— Mark 12:30-31 (*TEV*)



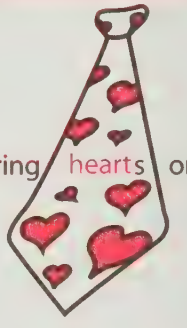
you might see a



balloon or a



box.



Have you ever seen someone wearing hearts on a tie?



Have you noticed hearts and flowers together?

You may discover chocolates with a

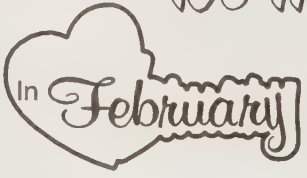


shape.

Perhaps you will receive a **Be my Valentine** card with an arrow from cupid



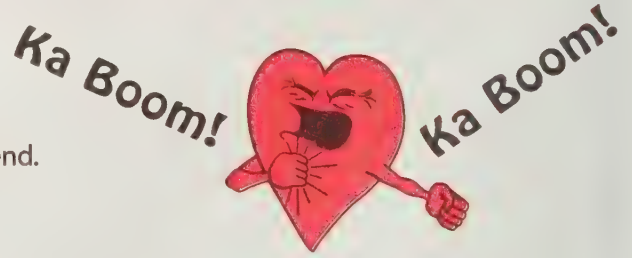
like this.



there is much talk about LOVE. Jesus talked about love.
Jesus talked about love **every** day. He lived every part of life in a loving way.
He loved God with his mind and with all his energy, and the people around him too.
When Jesus healed people, he was generous and kind.
He told stories with loving messages.

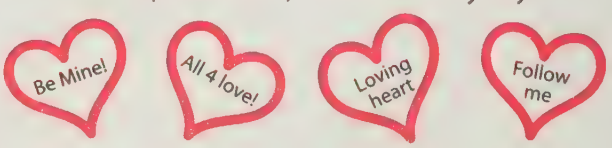
Have you ever run very fast, and felt your heart pounding in your chest? Right now, let's pay attention to your heart.
Put on your favourite music and dance with your hand on your heart.
Where in your body is the heart found? (Answer: the heart is found on the left side of your chest.)

The heart inside your body is a pump that makes a sound.
It is easy to hear the heartbeat of another person.
Save a cardboard tube from an empty roll of paper towels.
Place one end of the tube gently on the left side of the chest of your friend.
Then listen at the other end of the tube.
This is like the first stethoscope invented by Dr. René Läennec in 1819.
His stethoscope was made of wood.



Link to more learning activities about the **heart** online at:
www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html

On February 14th, you may receive or give loving messages.
But, remember, love is for every day.



Listen to the patterns God has placed in your heart.
When you are aware of your heartbeat, it is like listening to God's loving rhythm.
At school or at home, at study or at play, awake or asleep, the steady booming of your heart
assures you of your strength, energy and love, and calls you to come to know God

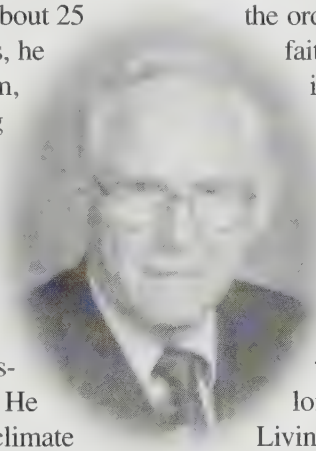
Wanda Thompson

From murder mysteries to Malawi

Bob Stinson found an antidote to boredom — in Malawi, Central Africa

One of Bob Stinson's favourite pastimes was reading murder mysteries. A quiet and unassuming man, he also kept busy with genealogy, gardening and revising textbooks. A retired physics professor from the University of Guelph and a widower, he was the proud father of three sons, as well as a father-in-law and a grandfather of two children.

Bob was a member of Westminster St. Paul's Church, in Guelph, Ontario, where he served as an elder for about 25 years. After retiring, with time heavy on his hands, he felt, frankly, bored. As an antidote to boredom, he looked for something to do besides reading murder mysteries. Bob found it in Livingstonia, Malawi, Central Africa, where the Presbyterian Church is a partner in the day-to-day operations of a residential secondary school. Hearing the school was in need of teachers, Bob indicated his willingness to help.



Although he had no previous experience in mission work, going to Livingstonia appealed to him. He welcomed the fact English was spoken there, the climate and food were good, and a handful of other expatriate teachers were there to guide him through the rough spots. So he began to make preparations to go to Malawi. He committed to a one-year stay — 10 months in 1997, plus an additional three months in 2000. He taught secondary school students in an isolated and remote northern part of the country.

After returning from Livingstonia the first time, Bob initiated fund-raising efforts and also raised awareness about the specific school needs in his typically quiet fashion. The congregation of Westminster St. Paul's responded by making the school its mission outreach project. Among other things, a scholarship fund was established whereby students in need would have an opportunity to attend school for a fee of only $17.50 per term, instead of the customary $35.

When he returned to Livingstonia, Bob took a computer and printer donated by Westminster St. Paul's. Other donations assisted the school in paying for necessary expenses not covered by inadequate and late-arriving government grants. By such acts of kindness and his own enthusiasm, Bob demonstrated to the students and staff that people in Canada care about them.

A new door opened for Bob in Livingstonia. Fewer students returned to school, freeing him for other duties. He effectively introduced the new computer technology to teachers and students. One local teacher proved to be adept at the computer, assuring Bob of its continued use after his return to Canada.

During breaks between terms, Bob travelled to Victoria Falls and to game parks in Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa. He observed the disparity between the Africa he saw daily in Livingstonia and the "typical, sanitized view of Africa reserved for the ordinary tourist." This increased his admiration for the faith and endurance of the people. He became increasingly intolerant of the discrepancies between life in the two worlds he knew.

Travelling around Livingstonia had its challenges. Potholes in the roads filled with sand washed out in the rainy season. Transportation in a four-wheel drive vehicle was not a luxury but a necessity. Bob also found medical facilities primitive and scarce. And living so far from major centres (without TV or newspapers), he often became lonely. With phones and radios unreliable, living in Livingstonia presented a challenge to his creativity and resourcefulness.

When asked what he would like to see for the future, Bob was confident the school in Livingstonia would survive. In the face of severe money and teacher shortages, the staff carry on with tremendous courage and vibrant expectancy for a better future.

Bob gained much from his experience. The amazing faith of the people living in extreme poverty both shamed him and strengthened his faith. He became a foe of the all-too-prevalent conspicuous consumption in the privileged nations of the world. His experience gave him an insight into the lives of the people that could never have been gained in a two-week tour. When he first explored options for service in the Third World, Wilma Welsh of International Ministries outlined the possibilities. With exuberant joy, Bob said, "Livingstonia won!"

Bob's poor health prevented his return to Livingstonia. But for the man who loved murder mysteries, Livingstonia had captured his heart. There was no mystery in how he felt about the people there. Bob died January 13, 2001, a few days before this profile went to press. R

Wanda Thompson is a member of Westminster-St. Paul's Church in Guelph, Ont.

Your Gifts at Work in 2001



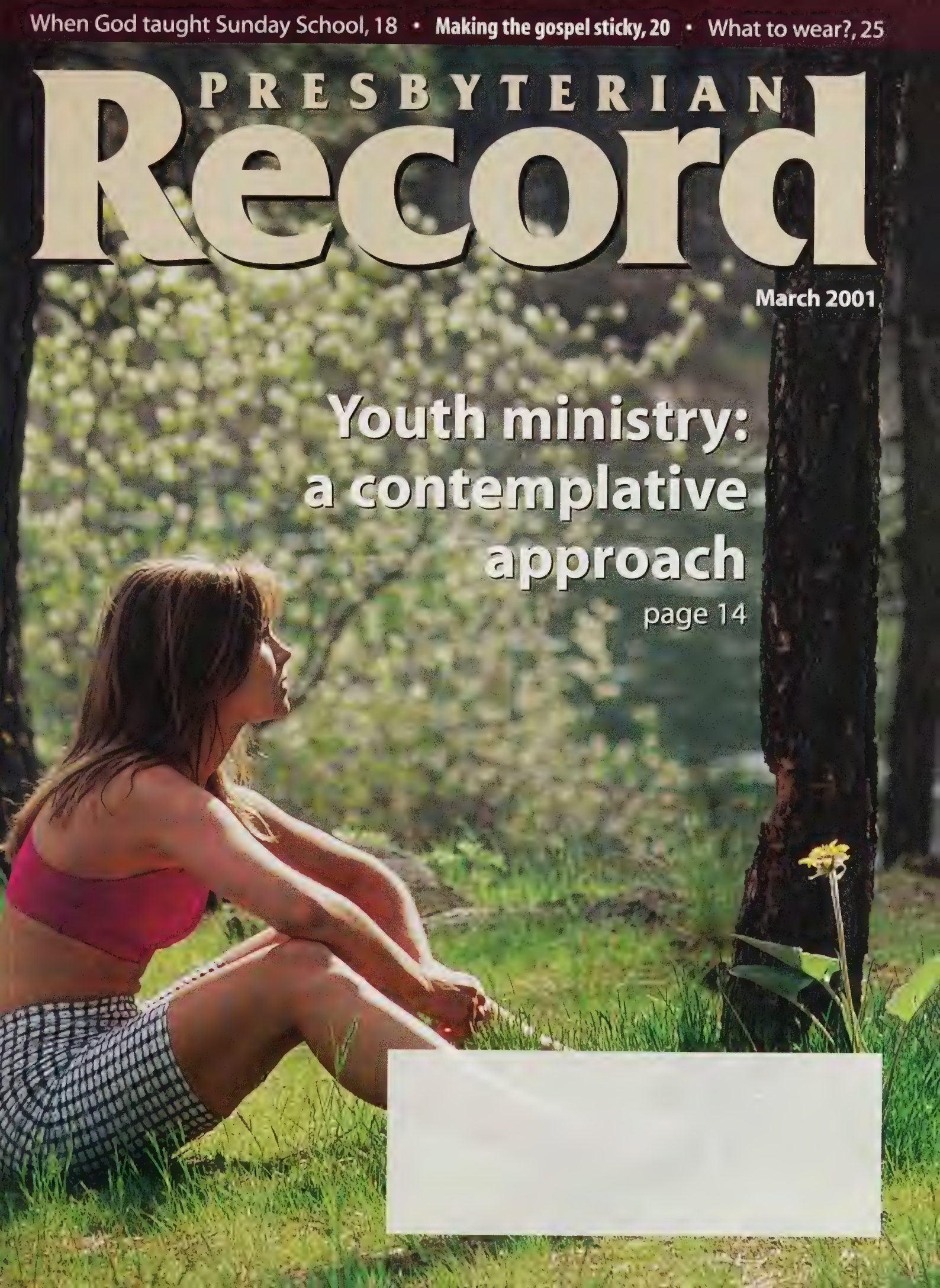
PRESBYTERIANS SHARING . . . 2001 Budget

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PRESBYTERIAN
Record

March 2001



Youth ministry: a contemplative approach

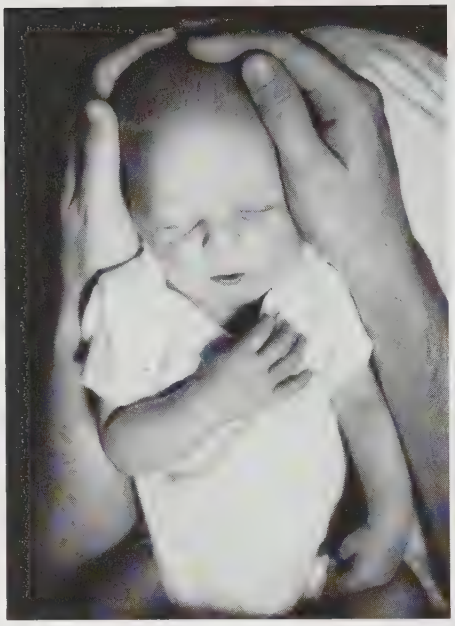
page 14

What a ride!

Christianity is not about being nice. It's about being called. If you follow Christ, you're going to get your parents, your church, and your friends ticked off....

No one lets high school kids do anything meaningful. You are the church, not when you grow up, but right now. So discover what God made you to do. Find your place and end up out of place.... Sometimes when things are rough, it's hard to tell if you are being killed or being saved. But what a ride!"

— Mike Yaconelli, speaking to a youth convention of the Christian Reformed Church



Only forgiveness can set free both the victim of oppression and the perpetrator of oppression.

— Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The great events of the world are not battles and elections and earthquakes and thunderbolts. The great events are babies, for each child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged with humanity, but is still expecting goodwill to become incarnate in each human life.

— Edmond McDonald

The world's children

UNICEF's *The State of the World's Children 2001* notes:

- Approximately 129 million children were born last year.
- Almost 11 million children under 5 died in the same year, most from easily preventable causes.
- More than 20 per cent of primary school-aged children in developing countries are not in school.
- About 20 million children have been displaced by conflict.
- About 177 million children are stunted, mainly because of malnutrition in pregnant women.
- Close to 15 million girls ages 15-19 give birth every year.

***—Globe and Mail*, December 19, 2000**

Quality a priority

We give people in the community the resources they need to run programs they believe in. Our philosophy is simple — the better the quality of life of the community, the better the business environment. If drugs and youth alienation are destroying a community, they will destroy business as well. It is therefore incumbent on business to make improvements in the community. We believe kids are an asset, not a liability, and a lot of our time is spent proving this out. The results are obviously worth it.

— David Hall, manager, Dufferin Mall, Toronto

Small churches more likely to grow

Over the past 20 years, 54.6 per cent of the total membership loss in The Presbyterian Church in Canada came from our largest 104 congregations. About 80 per cent of the total loss came from congregations with 250 or more members, even though these congregations represent only 21 per cent of all our churches. By way of comparison, The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1978 had 357 congregations with less than 60 members. While this was our largest single group of congregations (one-third of our churches), this segment accounted for only 1.8 per cent of the total membership loss. For some unknown reason, the trend for membership decline tends to tail off as congregations decline to the 75-member mark. This appears to be the most stable size of church in our denomination. Also noteworthy, one-third of the congregations with memberships under 125 people experienced some degree of growth over the study period. Smaller churches were more likely to grow than larger ones.

— from the interim report of the Study Group to Research Membership Decline

Christian motto

We are so fearful of exerting any kind of religious dominion over our nation that we have become the possum that the Canadian beaver now traipses over while it builds its next fiscal or social dam. *"Quando omni flunkus moritati"* — When all else fails, play dead — has become the motto for some Christians in Canada today.

— Jeff Loach

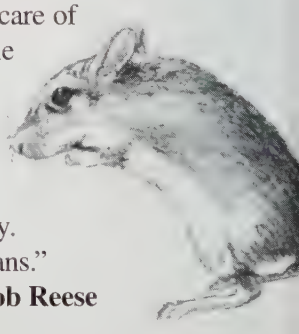
Tolerate

When our fifth grade class got some gerbils for room pets, one pupil came up to me with a book on how to take care of them. She read this sentence: "A truly tame female will tolerate handling even during her pregnancy." She wanted to know what that meant.

"Well," I began, "pregnancy means she is expecting babies."

"I know that!" the girl snapped impatiently. "I just wanted to know what the word tolerate means."

— Jacob Reese




John Congram

A painful birth

Let's pray that the rest of the 21st century is not as agonizing as the first few months

When Saint Paul spoke in Romans 8 of the whole creation groaning in labour pains, do you think he could have been envisioning the beginning of the 21st century? It has had a traumatic and unhappy beginning on several fronts.

In mid-January, the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry transmitted an urgent message to the Moderator of the General Assembly, the principal clerk and myself. The request was that we "be urged to make an immediate public statement on the recent same-sex marriages that occurred in Toronto, and to clearly state our position as a church on Christian marriage."

I suspect the presbytery did not mean to call whatever happened at Metropolitan Church in Toronto a "marriage." Rev. Brent Hawkes of the Metropolitan Church is a master at gaining press coverage for whatever cause he espouses. One is always reluctant to give him any more publicity than he has already received. For any who may have missed it, here is what our Presbyterian subordinate standards in *Living Faith* say about marriage:

"Christian marriage is a union in Christ
whereby a man and woman become one in the sight of God.
It is a commitment of two people
to love and to support one another faithfully for life."

You might want to read the whole of Section 8 in *Living Faith* entitled "The Christian Family."

Even more troubling has been the case of Robert Latimer and his sentencing to serve 10 years in prison for murdering his severely disabled daughter. Here, again, our church has been clear in its views about euthanasia or mercy killing: "The Presbyterian Church in Canada holds that the value given human life by God and by human relationships precludes any support for assisted suicide. Euthanasia or assisted suicide are not private matters of individual morality." So declared the General Assembly in 1994 as part of a report entitled "Euthanasia: A Matter of Life or Death." The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), with whom we now have observer status, has spoken out regularly and consistently in support of the right to life of all people, including the severely disabled.

While it is hard for Christians to argue against this position, those who prosecute it with excessive glee sometimes come across as overly pious and self-righteous, especially if they have never been in Robert Latimer's position. It would have helped, as well, if Latimer did not continue to maintain that what he did was right and, given the same situation in the future, he might do it again. The EFC declared that the Supreme Court "should uphold the sanctity of life and the dignity of all persons, regardless of their circumstances." I cannot argue against that, but don't expect me to throw a party to celebrate Robert Latimer's 10-year prison sentence.

Saying something about this case is as difficult as trying to say something about the conflict in the Middle East. Nine leaders of Christian churches in Canada (including our Moderator) recently made an attempt. After several false starts, they issued a balanced and helpful statement on the situation that you can read more about in the News section of the February *Record*. Because of the church's poor record in relationship to Jews, I have sometimes wondered if we had a right to say anything. Yet, many Christians suffer terribly in this conflict.

To conclude the first month of the new century, earthquakes in both El Salvador and India caused unimaginable pain and suffering that challenges the faith of even the hardiest saint. Our church has connections with both countries. Thankfully, none of our workers in either country was injured. Thankfully, too, these are cases where all of us can take direct action. Through Presbyterian World Service and Development and their partners in those countries, we can make our presence felt to ease the pain. In disasters like these, debate becomes profanity; generous giving is the only appropriate response.

John Congram

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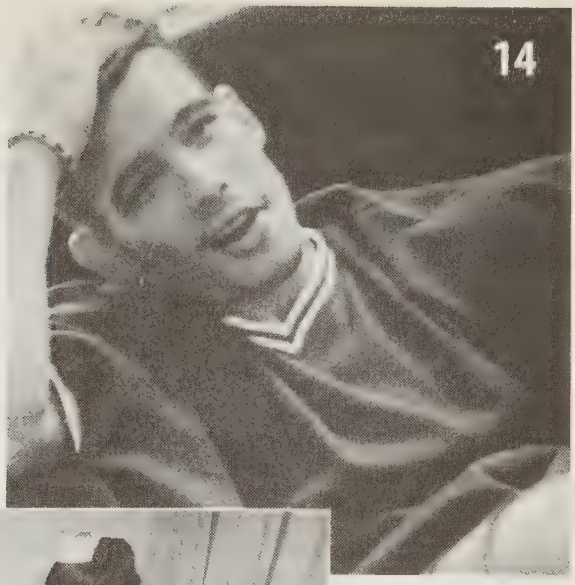
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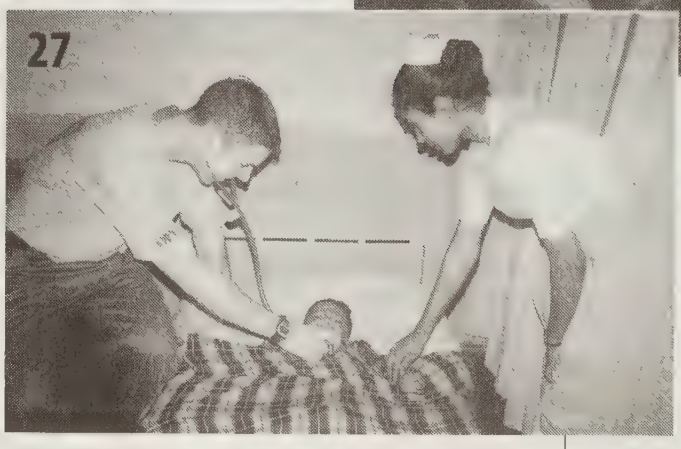
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Mark Yaconelli
Rather than entertaining young people, invite them to be transformed

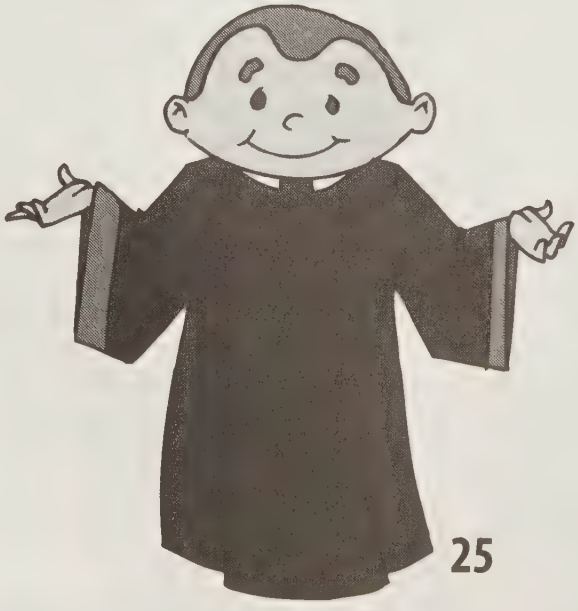
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Needs of the newcomer

While surfing the Internet, I came across the *Record*'s Web site. I am the daughter of a Methodist minister. I was born in Perth, Scotland, and studied divinity at teachers college. I came to Canada in 1967 and am now retired.

I have recently become aware of my growing need to return to the family of Christ. I have found fellowship with a group of Christian women in a non-denominational environment — they are "born again," dynamic fundamentalists. But their theology, although tempting, is not what I grew up with. So I also attended a Presbyterian church for about 10 Sundays.

I listened to wonderful sermons, sang familiar hymns, shook hands with the minister, signed the church folder for visitors and listened to announcements for church dinners and church drama presentations. I wished someone would ask my name and invite me to participate. I wished the minister would invite himself to my home to find out what my needs are. I asked for envelopes and was advised by mail I could pick them up in the vestibule. I asked for these to draw attention to the fact I wanted to "belong." I'm disinterested in the tax deduction.

Every church should have a "lookout," someone whose role it is to notice a new face and invite that person to the coffee time. (I never did make it there myself.) A follow-up phone call should be made during the week to assure newcomers there is room for them in the pews. Being handed an order of service is not enough. When strangers walk into a church, they are looking for companionship, friendship, for someone to walk *with* them, not simply for a place to sit in a room where everyone else seems to know each other.

I walked into the church expecting a place where someone cared I was there and wanting to be part of the church community. I have so much to offer, but no one knows. I guess I will continue searching for needed support on my "way back into the fold." I will look in other places for invitations to Bible study, spiritual growth and Christian companionship.

I'm strong, intelligent and able to continue my search. Many who are more vulnerable may simply give up.

Maggie Khaja,
Newmarket, Ont.

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Drawing strength from the past

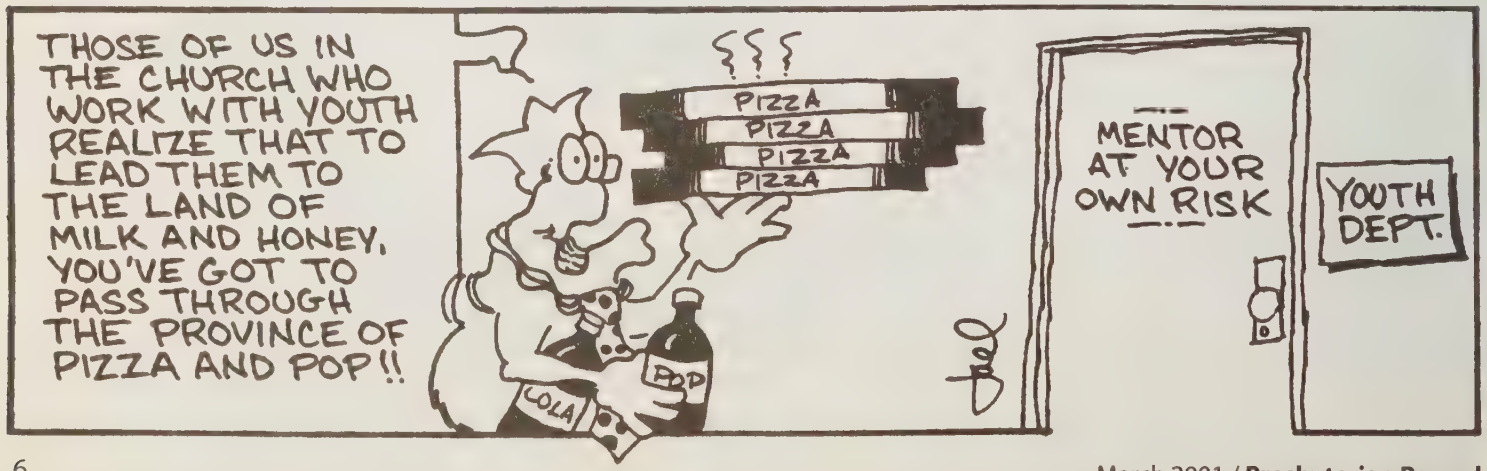
I write in response to Keith Boyer's passing reference to the *Celebrate!* Committee's video *A Glimpse at the Family Photo Album: The Presbyterian Church at 125* (Vox Populi, January *Record*). It recounts something of our glorious past as a denomination in a way (I hope) that does not lead to the evasions of nostalgia but to Christ's call to us in our generation.

One of the best ways of escaping the "ocean of sadness" or a "sea of resentment and anger" — poisonous outcomes of grief gone wrong — is honest engagement in ministry in our own time. To that end, it is useful to consider both the opportunities and the pitfalls for mission that our spiritual forebears encountered — and to come to some judgment about their faithfulness in their task. Living in the era of the British Empire, for example, presented both opportunities and risks for Christian mission. Not all opportunities were exploited, nor were all the pitfalls successfully avoided. But, on balance, the record is one for which we can take some justifiable pride.

I don't feel any particular need either to grieve or to apologize for the Presbyterian record. I am content simply to know it as best I can — and to draw strength and comfort from the legacy that is ours.

Barry Mack,
St. Lambert, Que.

Pontius' Puddle



Dream or nightmare?

In Scripture, God often revealed his will through dreams or visions. I believe he may do so today; but I seriously question the Moderator's dream as he reported it in the December *Record*. This seems to be a nightmare, not a dream.

He begins by ascribing human frailties to Jesus who ignorantly questions the meaning of church symbols and denominational labels. Everything in Scripture and in our denominational doctrine indicates Jesus is omniscient and would know these things without human instructions. The Moderator then interprets for us God's desire for ecumenical union. The justification for this conclusion is the improper exegesis of John 17:11, which surely applies to the universal body of believers and not to the eradication of denominations.

The dream continues as governments of our land are urged to use tax dollars for hand-outs to street people. He erroneously observes that churches do not welcome youth with tattoos or body jewellery. He incorrectly generalizes that church music "sucks" and ministers are both antiquated and bereft of a valid message. Are these exaggerated stereotypes representative of our denomination? Or has the Moderator missed attending gatherings where Jesus is celebrated as Lord of all generations?

His dream does injustice to our congregation and to many others in this presbytery and throughout our land. Congregations visit the sick, reach out to those outside the church, engage in evangelism, welcome children and youth, proclaim the gospel, teach and apply the Word of God by the guidance of the Spirit of God. Yes, there are vital, vibrant, growing churches within The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Now, that is a dream worth reporting, a dream being lived out in congregations where Jesus is worshipped and glorified!

While I appreciate the Moderator's attempt at hyperbole to make a point, it would be far more productive for him to cast a positive vision for our church.

Bobby Ogdon,
Surrey, B.C.

Germs in the chalice

There is overwhelming evidence that the common Communion cup is a vehicle for the rapid transmission of infectious germs. Kenneth F. Gregory and John A. Carpenter, professors of microbiology at the University of Guelph, Ontario, carried out experiments along with Dr. Glen C. Bending of the University College of Medicine, San Bernardino, California. They found that varieties of staphylococcus and streptococcus and other organisms easily survive in the chalice after reception of the consecrated wine and bread. Both the common Communion cup and its contents could serve effectively as a means for the transmission of infectious micro-organisms.

Evan H. Jones,
London, Ont.

What can the church do?

In his article "What I learned in preschool" (December *Record*), Greg deGroot-Maggetti suggests we need a government program to provide child care. I think such a solution to the demanding situations parents face is, well, boring. It's unoriginal and uninspiring.

"More government spending" is a solution offered every day in most mainstream secular media to almost every social problem or situation. This is understandable — the government is the highest reference our secular media has. As God's people, however, we look to a higher and more creative power. It would be more interesting in a religious publication to read ideas on what Christian communities and individuals could do in response to a particular social situation.

Cathy Bell,
Drumheller, Alta.

The real John Pinck

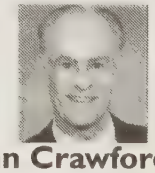
I commend you for your series focusing on ministry with children, teens and young adults. Emphasizing the needs of the young people of the church is important. And the excellent articles have been thought-provoking and inspiring.

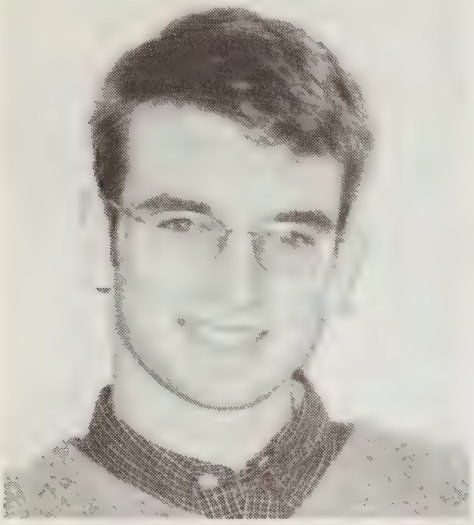
I was especially pleased to read my grandson's views on page 15 of the January issue. But to clear up some confusion,

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the young man with rings in his eyebrow, nose and lip is not John Pinck. This is a picture of John.

Evelyn Ball,
Ottawa

Poem of hope

I was reading the *Record* late at night and started to feel down about the decline in people going to church. I am a single mom on disability with a daughter entering puberty. We live on a very low budget, but God has pulled us through. I wrote a poem that may lift someone who reads the next *Record.*

Someone, somewhere, loves you
With all their heart and soul.
They will not be selfish to you;
You can feel it in your depths....

One day a light goes on inside;
You feel the love of God.
Survival is a wonderful thing!
Life can be lived and shared....

Heather Vanderweide,
Acton, Ont.

Editor's note: *The* ***Record*** *printed only two verses of Heather's poem.*

A choir is more than singing

I always enjoy Jim Taylor's articles and his homespun read on situations. His January article struck a chord with me as I, too, am a choir member of many years standing.

He speaks of the temptation to go with the flow, rather than being an individual Christian. He compares this to the difficulty of singing his bass part along with the other parts and trying to hear himself in order to "do it right." I can make a suggestion that could improve his choral singing and give him another outlook on Christianity.

In any choir, one of the most important criteria is blend. This is not achieved by blocking out what others are doing; on the contrary, one listens closely to what they are doing and fits his/her part into it. When things are going well, you'll hardly hear yourself but will feel the perfect meshing of all the parts.

Our choir has been a tremendous source of fellowship over the years. I believe it is because we are always looking for "blend," even in times of trouble, rather than enhancing our own parts.

Like Christianity, trusting enough to let go of yourself and hear what others are doing rather than only concentrating on your own part is not easy. But once you do, you'll see the individual is both more important and less important as all the parts blend to make music. You won't hear sopranos, altos, tenors and basses belting out their parts in isolation but you will hear beautiful interdependent parts, sensitive to each other, forming a harmonious whole greater than the sum of the parts — like the church.

And here you thought the choir only sang!

Sharon Winkler Moren,
Ottawa

Now what?

I have always thought of myself as an average Canadian but, according to Stats Canada, I'm not. This astute body reports the "average" Canadian spent $1,200 for Christmas presents. And, in the next news flash, it broadcast that local food banks and Out of the Cold programs were extremely busy.

Not being a mathematician, this equation puzzles me. On the one hand, the very rich (and a few not-so-rich) spend millions on toys and trinkets to take to this birthday "party." But, on the other, what must those who are poor and in need think of this "new-born King" whose birthday we celebrate so lavishly?

The tinsel and the bright lights are all put away. Now what? We sing " ... come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord." But, often, this plea goes unheeded and gets packed away with the strings of lights and tree ornaments.

How powerful our God-given gifts would be if only we channelled them in the right direction.

Ruth McPherson,
Thorold, Ont.

What children want — or need?

I thought the January cover title of the very good article on the place of 11- to 14-year-olds in the church unfortunate. While the article primarily told us about how children, or at least a child or two, were involved in a congregation, the thrust of the "marketing" title seemed to push us toward remaking the church in accord with the inclinations (the wants) of 11- to 14-year-olds.

A high school vice-principal who came to my office observed the *Presbyterian Record* on the table. He commented: "We never ask them that question at my high school. We spend most of our time keeping them from getting what they want."

I am inclined to his view. I wonder what we will get in the church in the long run if we entice young people to come by appealing to their selfishness and tell them later that following Jesus requires something of them, even taking up a cross.

Richard Topping,
Montreal

Message from on high

I got a smile and a memory jolt from Donna Lord's item (Recordings, January *Record*). When working in Toronto for a large corporation many years ago, I was president of the Ontario Division of the Navy League. The general manager was Jim Crist. Coming back to my desk on one occasion, I found a telephone message form from my secretary propped on my phone: "Christ called"! It gives one a turn to get a personal call like that — and at about age 40! Maybe I was "receiving a call" — but by telephone?

Fraser McKee,
Markdale, Ont.


Glen Davis

The day the minister was baptized

Children often bear God's message and grace to adults

The people leave their seats and go forward to gather around the font. The proud parents carry little Zachary to their place beside the minister. Zachary is alert and bright, squirming around to watch people gather. "This one," thinks the minister, "will be trouble." Most 1 1/2-year-olds do not take kindly to strangers dumping water on their heads.

Questions are asked; promises are made. Mom hands Zachary over to the minister. The minister scoops a handful of water from the bowl. "William Zachary," he says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father," (another handful) "and the Son," (a third handful) "and the Holy Spirit."

By this time, the water is running down the back of Zachary's neck, but he is not objecting. After observing every motion carefully, he starts to move. Slowly, his hand descends toward the bowl. Rather than stopping him, the minister helps him reach the water. The little hand gathers a few drops and comes up, reaching tentatively for the minister's head! Not once, but three times as the minister is commissioning him to confess Christ as long as he lives, Zachary carefully "baptizes" the minister.

The minister's eyes grow big with wonder and surprise. He looks down at Zachary and says: "Thank you, Zachary. Thank you so much. I really needed a blessing today."

There are many smiles and not a few tears. What a beautiful moment. Suddenly, the simple, powerful words of Scripture fill my mind: " … and a little child shall lead them" and " … whoever receives one such child in my name receives me."

Was this only a child's meaningless mimicking of an adult's actions, or was it a sign of the Spirit at work? Its effect on those present was profound. "Zachary participated in the baptism as much as we did," said one person.

When we ignore the little ones, we are missing the presence of Christ

"He was acting out the Great Commission to 'go and baptize' even as he was being commissioned," said another.

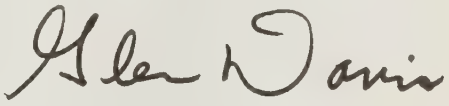
Thus, an ordinary Sunday service is transformed into an extraordinary experience of the presence of God. And it is a child who is the messenger.

In this year of focus on children and youth, I have noticed again how often children are excluded in the church, or treated merely as those who need babysitting while adults do the "important" things. We glare at them when they make a noise in church. We grumble when grubby hands smudge our newly painted walls. We greet their parents and don't even acknowledge the children's presence. When budgets are tight, the first thing we cut is the Christian educator or youth worker. We turn up our noses at the music they like and then wonder why they don't want to come to church.

I know there are many wonderful exceptions to this picture. But it is still a fair description of how children and youth are treated in some of our churches. When we are moved to change those attitudes, it is usually because we are startled by the decline in children's attendance at church. We see children and youth as the ones who will fill the empty pews and ensure the survival of the church.

I suggest there is a better reason to take children seriously. Children are the messengers of God's word to us. They are bearers of God's blessing to us. They are channels of God's grace to us. When we ignore the little ones, we are missing the presence of Christ.

"Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).



Several years ago, I wrote a version of this story for *Equip*, a publication of the Life and Mission Agency. The baptism took place about seven years ago at Beaches Church, Toronto.

Moderator's itinerary

March 11
St. Andrew's, Hamilton, Bermuda

March 18
South Gate, Hamilton, Ontario

March 25-27
Assembly Council, Crieff Hills, Ontario

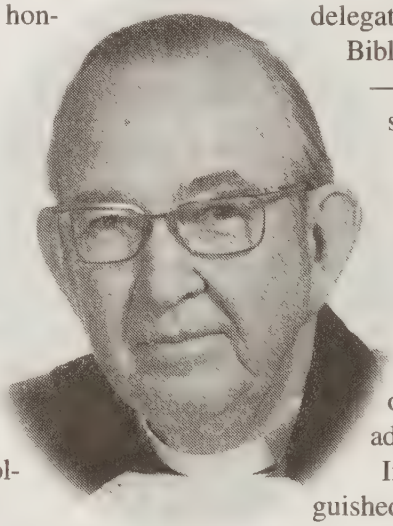
March 27 (evening)
Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington, Ontario

April 1
St. Andrew's, Cobourg, Ontario
70th anniversary Marce Wood WMS

DeCourcy H. Rayner: pastor and journalist

DeCourcy H. Rayner, a former Moderator of General Assembly and editor of the *Presbyterian Record* for 19 years, died December 21 in Toronto. He was 91.

Born in a city that shared his middle name, "Hamilton" (Ontario), on November 14, 1909, DeCourcy Rayner received his primary and secondary education in Kingston, Watford and Dutton, Ontario. He studied arts at the University of Toronto and graduated from Knox College in 1937. In 1966, Knox College recognized him with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree.



DeCourcy Rayner came by his love of journalism naturally. His father, Rev. Thomas DeCourcy Rayner, was a local correspondent for two London, Ontario, newspapers, as well as for the Toronto *Globe*. While attending the University of Toronto, the young Rayner worked as an editor on the university newspaper, *The Varsity*, which was a daily publication at the time. He later recalled that he was one of the few editors not fired. "My successor, who later had a distinguished career as a professor of systematic theology, lasted only two months!"

Following his graduation, DeCourcy was ordained in his father's church, St. Andrew's in Lachine, Quebec. He then travelled by ship to (what is now known as) Guyana with his wife, Marion (Marie) White, a registered nurse with secretarial training whom he married in 1933.

Their four years in Guyana were extraordinarily busy. DeCourcy managed some of the 32 primary schools and two high schools administered by the church and was secretary-treasurer of the mission council and field missionary. On his first Christmas Day as field missionary, every congregation on the Essequibo coast wanted him for a special worship service. When he arrived in the early morning darkness for the first of seven services he was to conduct, he was startled by two bright flashes and two loud shots. He was told: "That was in honour of you ... when the Governor comes, they fire 21 guns, but we could only manage two."

When the Rayners returned to Canada in May 1941, DeCourcy became minister of Outremont Church in Montreal. He was soon claimed by the RCAF and was commissioned as a chaplain in 1943, serving in Canada and England. For 12 years after the war, he was chaplain of 401 City of Westmount Squadron, RCAF Reserve, and received the Canadian Forces Decoration and the Coronation Medal of Queen Elizabeth II while a reserve padre.

Before being appointed editor of the *Presbyterian Record* in 1958, DeCourcy served for 12 years as a district secretary of the Canadian Bible Society in Montreal. He was Canadian delegate to the first World Assembly of the United Bible Societies in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1972 — the year of the first Russia-Canada hockey series. Always a journalist, he and another minister, after obtaining the score from the Canadian ambassador, made sure the news of Paul Henderson's goal was included in the Bible Society's assembly newsletter.

While editor, he served on numerous local and national boards and committees of the Presbyterian Church. He was also a president of the Associated Church Press and the Canadian Church Press organizations.

In 1977, DeCourcy Rayner's years of distinguished service were acknowledged by the national church when he was elected Moderator of the 103rd General Assembly. After retiring as editor of the *Presbyterian Record* at the end of 1977, Rayner served as an assistant minister at St. Andrew's Church and at Armour Heights Church, Toronto.

An ardent curler, he helped found the East Metro Ministerial Curling Club, often disappearing from the office on Mondays and reappearing at the rink. It is a tradition still followed by many ministers today.

His friend and colleague, Rev. Ken McMillan (the "other" minister in Addis Ababa), summed up DeCourcy's long life with succinctness and precision when he said it would "not be measured by its duration, but by its donation. DeCourcy made a very significant donation in every type of ministry to which he was called."

Predeceased by his beloved Marie, DeCourcy Hamilton Rayner is survived by his daughters, Sally Schiller of Munich, Germany, Sue (and Deke) McBrien of North York, Ontario, and Diana (and Michael) Tordjman of North York; his sister, Ruth Cowie; and three grandchildren. R

Marilyn Vander Woude

Calling all moms

Two groups for young mothers help a congregation reach out to its community

There is chaos in the church! Stephanie steps over a baby carrier to welcome a new mom to the group with her own baby carrier and toddler in tow. It's 9:30 on a Wednesday morning and the Moms 'n' Tots group is in full swing. Over the giggles of two preschoolers, Stephanie announces a youth group for grades six to eight that will start next week; anyone interested in helping may sign up or tell her older children.

One mom discreetly breast-feeds while coffee is served. It is a casual, yet valuable time. Ideas are shared, thoughts are welcomed and it all takes place in the house of God.

In the summer of 1999, Stephanie and Jeff Blomberg returned home from six years travelling abroad. Jeff is a talented hockey player who had played in the National Hockey League and in Europe. They were awaiting the arrival of their third child and wanted to come back to Wingham, Ontario. Both devoted Christians, they returned to their home church of St. Andrew's. As a young mother, Stephanie had found solace away from home in various mothers groups. She saw a need for an outreach program in our community and soon set about contacting the session of the church to secure a place to start a "moms" group.



Stephanie Blomberg leads Moms 'n' Tots at St. Andrew's Church in Wingham, Ont.

Many of us who live in small towns speak of its virtues: neighbours help neighbours. Our churches need to be welcoming to all. Recently, our population has increased due to several new industries. There was a clear need to meet our new neighbours. Stephanie created two new groups: a Moms 'n' Tots group and a Moms Helping Moms group. Both have been resounding successes.

The purpose of the Moms 'n' Tots group is to create a weekly time of sharing with mothers and their younger children. The children enjoy play, crafts, snacks and sing-song. The mothers share a time of interaction with their children and with other mothers. The group meets in the Upper Room in our church every Wednesday morning from 9:15 to 11:15. Mothers are expected to volunteer weekly for snack, craft, set-up and clean-up. There is no fee, and the group is open to anyone with or without church affiliation.

Gradually, we have seen more young

families join our Sunday worship services. Providing a non-threatening, caring, loving environment where participation is free and, therefore, open to all socio-economic backgrounds is a great way to reach a non-Christian community.

It is a casual, yet valuable time, and it all takes place in the house of God

It is not merely a ploy to attract new members; it allows the church to participate in a positive way in the community. For the moms, it is an opportunity to make friends and to provide each other with emotional support. Small children benefit greatly from social interaction with other children and adults.

The second group, Moms Helping Moms, meets twice a month at a different member's home. In this group, mothers share and care for each other through a variety of means. Women in this group include some younger moms as well as working moms and moms with older children. A wide range of topics is discussed: marriage, parenting, school issues, health issues and Bible studies. A committee arranges guest speakers and discussion topics from suggestions by the group. Last year's topics included: funeral preparation, personal testimonies of those who had lost loved ones, aroma therapy, adolescents, a Christmas cookie exchange, games night, women's medical issues and a discussion on Harry Potter!

The group is also practical. Need help painting that bathroom? Not to worry, someone in the group will help. Need a night out with only your husband? Not to worry, someone will baby-sit. Having a baby? Not to worry, several group members will make meals for you during your first few days at home. Not everyone participates at once, but everyone plays a role in reciprocating for the assistance she has received. The group is not intended to add more stress to a woman's already busy life. It is set up to free moms from some obligations so they can spend more time with family.

Moms Helping Moms is a support group with Christian roots, started to fill a niche in our community. Church affiliation is not stressed, and members come from all spectrums of the church community. The goals are to strengthen each other as Christians and to evangelize other women in a non-threatening, helpful way. Currently, there are 20 active members in the evening group and 22 moms and 32 kids in the Moms 'n' Tots group.

It's 11:30, Wednesday morning, and quiet again reigns supreme throughout St. Andrew's. The session and congregation have given their full support and blessing to both moms groups. Perhaps some loneliness, isolation and questions have been answered, and a vital link between church and community has been established. R

Marilyn Vander Woude is a free-lance writer and member of St. Andrew's Church in Wingham, Ont.

St. Andrew's
Kitchener, Ontario

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pastoral epistles from peter plymley II

My dear editor:

The Rev. Fiona Fitzhenry-Whiteside is considering the idea of giving up something for Lent — her pulpit. No, she has not decided to preach while wandering the aisles, à la Phil Donahue. She says she is pondering the possibility of leaving pastoral ministry for something easier — "like selling crop insurance in Bangladesh" (to use her own words).

She had been in a bit of a funk since Epiphany, having read a newsletter from one of our theological colleges (which shall not be named to avoid charges of favouritism, though Epiphany gives a clue to the curious). It bore the results of yet another survey done on theological education in North America.

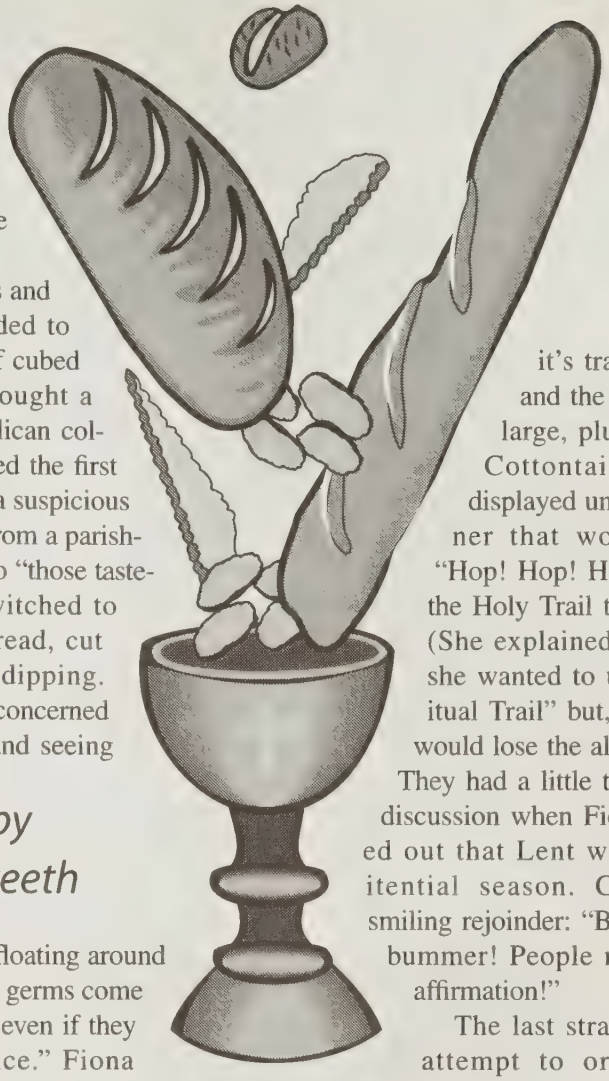
As priorities for ministers, laypeople ranked spirituality as first and foremost and theological knowledge as fifth and last. Clergy offered being a "role model" as their prime priority, spirituality fourth and theological knowledge last. Theological professors thought theological knowledge was most important; they didn't rank spirituality at all.

Fiona's attempt to leaven Communion by using different breads met with gritted teeth

At the time, I agreed with Fiona that something was seriously wrong with this picture but filed it under "to brood over." Fiona was determined to do something, if only in her small corner, to close the apparent gap between theology and spirituality. You may remember (but probably not) that her suburban congregation was, by the usual standards, thriving and her ministry well-received. Accordingly, she encountered little opposition to her initial innovation.

Thinking that one of the best ways to combine spirituality and theology is in the celebration of Holy Communion, she held an early service every second Sunday morning at which she preached briefly on some aspect of sacramental theology and led in prayer requests. To keep the service short and in anticipation of a small congregation, she instituted Communion by Intinction (communicants coming forward, dipping the bread in the chalice).

To simplify things and save time, she decided to use wafers instead of cubed white bread, and bought a supply from an Anglican colleague. That prompted the first complaint, not from a suspicious ultra-Protestant but from a parishioner who objected to "those tasteless chips." She switched to squares of white bread, cut larger to facilitate dipping. The next complaint concerned hygiene. "I can't stand seeing those yucky crumbs floating around in there and, anyway, germs come from people's hands even if they don't touch the juice." Fiona switched to pita bread and (the more antiseptic) wine. Two more objections were voiced, one about "supporting the liquor trade" and the other about "foreign bread that might trigger allergies and is too hard to tear off and you end of with big chunks you have to choke down." The closest thing to a theological query was a protest: "I don't see why we need to remember Jesus with religious mumbo-jumbo. I remember him better feeding my cats and tending my zinnias."



There *were* quiet expressions of support and appreciation, but complaints rankled. Fiona decided to ask (or, as she put it, to "empower") the congregation and seek ideas for Lent, a spiritual and theological season if ever there was one.

The first proposal, from an eager and efficient young woman on the social committee, was a "Leap into Lent" festival tea and sale that involved decorating the hall with purple bows and bunting ("not a cheery colour, but I understand it's traditional") and the raffle of a large, plush "Peter Cottontail" rabbit displayed under a banner that would read "Hop! Hop! Hop! Down the Holy Trail to Easter!" (She explained to Fiona she wanted to use "Spiritual Trail" but, then, she would lose the alliteration.) They had a little theological discussion when Fiona pointed out that Lent was a penitential season. Came the smiling rejoinder: "But that's a bummer! People need self-affirmation!"

The last straw was an attempt to organize a "Slim for Him" group. Fiona thought dieting was usually a mixed-motive endeavour but, at least, it was Lenten-like. She was prepared to live in peace with the initiative until she read an article in an old issue of *The New Yorker* magazine, a profile of the founder of the Weigh Down movement, Gwen Shamblin, who had assumed guru status with her local dieters. In it, Ms. Shamblin described herself as: " … having a crush on God. I think he is fabulously, wonderfully good-looking. I think he is delightful and has got a great sense of humour. He is so powerful, so rich, so famous. He has got on designer clothes."

I said at least she was right about the sense of humour.

Yours for positive penitence,

Peter Plymley II



Youth

What does it say about the future of the church that we contract out the spiritual care of our youth?

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No experience necessary.

Start IMMEDIATELY.

8-10 hours a week.

Call First Presbyterian.

Every week, local churches looking for someone — anyone — to work with their youth place ads like this one at nearby seminaries. Never mind that most seminary students do not belong to local churches, are overwhelmed with schoolwork and are sorting out their own faith; these churches are desperate to find someone who will "do something" with their kids. Punch onto the job listings on the Youth Specialties Web site and you find the same phenomenon: hundreds of churches are eager to find someone who will form their children in the Christian faith.

What's happened? Why are we so eager to hand the spiritual development of our young people to the first person we find who can locate the New Testament and who needs a little part-time work? Have we forgotten that one of the most sacred of human activities is sharing the intimacies of our souls, our values and the visions of our hearts with children? This is not a task for overloaded students; it is the privilege of every Christian congregation.

#7 in the series focusing on ministry with children, teens and young adults

ministry: a contemplative approach

by Mark Yaconelli

Just as a marriage can be strengthened and expanded or weakened and exposed through the raising of a child, so it is with a church's spiritual parenting. In the formation of children, a congregation's spiritual life is revealed and potentially renewed. What do our youth ministries tell us about the health of our congregations? How does the spiritual formation of children reveal a congregation's images of Christian discipleship? What does it say about the future of the church that we contract out the spiritual care of our youth?

The problem goes far deeper than the neglect of catechetical duties. It is not that we've forgotten how to pass on our faith but that we often can't find any faith to pass on. We're afraid to face the questions, the honesty and the challenges of our young people lest they expose our own doubt, confusion and emptiness. What we fear most in our youth is not their rambunctiousness, but their lack of interest in the Bible, their boredom in worship, their dismissal of church doctrine. We fear their judgment of the church as trivial, even laughable. We don't know how to respond to their questions and behaviours. In unguarded moments, we secretly agree with them, yet we hide our doubts behind the whir and buzz of worship and activities and, like the Wizard of Oz, shout, "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!"

But the curtain must be pulled back. If we are to keep young people involved in the church and if we are to renew our congregations, we must first acknowledge that many of our current forms of youth ministry are destructive.

Our current practice, promotion and publishing with regard to youth ministry are still grounded in models developed in the 1940s and '50s for white, suburban, middle-class youth. Although a variety of adolescent discipleship models have come out of communities whose ethnicity and socio-economic status differ from the status quo, it is the suburban, middle-class forms that dominate the field. Existing strategies of youth ministry are limited and often ineffective because they fail to invite young people into Christian communities in living communion with the Spirit of Jesus Christ; instead, most youth ministries are formed around the following unspoken themes.

Entertainment

The entertainment model rises out of adult fears of secular society and adolescent freedom. This approach is designed to keep kids safe while creating attractive associations with religious institutions through ski trips, game nights, rafting trips and other fun activities. The "entertainment" model readily accepts the values of consumer culture. Programs are created and advertised like those of any secular youth club. A young person's Christian commitment is measured according to the products and events he or she consumes: Did she attend the fall rafting retreat? The all-night paint-ball fest? Does he listen to Christian music? Does she own "What Would Jesus Do?" bracelets and a matching cap and journal?

In this program-centred ministry, the staff, parents and church members act as administrators and chaperones. Though spiritual transformation might occur, it certainly isn't the primary focus. Churches are afraid that if they confront the market-driven values in which young people are immersed, youth will be turned off; better to offer easily consumable, culture-friendly programs with a digestible Christian coating.

The results can be destructive. Treating youth as activity consumers often is a way of turning adults into customer service representatives, not ministers. Not surprisingly, the average youth director quits within 18 months, volunteers are difficult to recruit (it takes a lot of time and energy to keep young people entertained) and youth rarely make lasting commitments to the Christian faith.

Charismatic youth leader

In this approach, a congregation hires a minister (usually young, attractive and recently graduated from college or sem-

inary) to be solely responsible for the spiritual well-being of young people. The unspoken assumption is that the youth director is the youth ministry. Church members and parents expect the youth minister to mediate the holy through his or her own spiritual charisma. This model is based on the old bait-and-switch ploy: people hope that the youth will first be attracted to this minister who will, at some point, get them to transfer their attention to God.

Such a congregation wants its youth leader to embody all the church's hopes and concerns for its young people. Depending on the constituency, youth ministers are expected to be substitute parents who mitigate the growing frustration and tension between adults and teenagers; hip baby-sitters who keep the youth occupied while the adults attend to the real business of the church; role models who set an example of Christian living that most parents are unable to match; pied pipers who lead youth into compliance with the values and practices of the adult church; and security guards who keep the adult congregation protected from the energies and disruptions of its adolescents.

The youth-leader-as-saviour approach, extrapolated from parachurch ministries like Young Life and Youth for Christ, has generally been destructive for all concerned. Alone and segregated from the church community, youth ministers are soon exhausted. Expected to be walking icons of the Risen Christ, they are not allowed to be fallible and their own need for Christian nurture goes unmet. Left as the sole mediator between the adult and youth congregations, youth ministers quickly become isolated, lonely and spiritually alienated. And even with the most well-intentioned ministers, the bait-and-switch strategy rarely works — teenagers often accept the youth minister as their personal saviour but are rarely able to transfer their devotion to Jesus Christ.

Information-centred

This model is most concerned with presenting young people with religious instruction. It assumes that youth ministry consists simply of teaching Christian content through common educational practices. This is discipleship through spiritual information rather than transformation. The Spirit is never invoked. The youth minister acts as the bearer of knowledge and develops effective ways to dispense this knowledge, just as a high school math teacher would. Methods of instruction are chosen indiscriminately and often are grounded in social science research rather than in biblical scholarship or Christian practice.

Those who succeed under this plan are adolescents who can parrot back the "right" answers regarding the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. The worst forms of this model are to be found in confirmation programs in which young people sit in classrooms week after week, absorbing lectures and "youth sermons" on Christian beliefs. Unfortunately, though such youth programs may convert young people to an interesting metaphysics, it's one they are likely to discard when they enrol in Philosophy 101. The Christian faith doesn't make sense unless one encounters the God who inspires theological musings and acts of Christian love. The power of the Christian faith is that it promises total transformation — body, spirit and mind. Limited to the intellect, religious formation becomes compartmentalized and often irrelevant.

To reform youth ministries, we must return to that which makes the church unique. Any secular organization can provide fun events, dynamic recreation leaders and good moral instruction. Only the church knows how to awaken people to the liberating presence of God. This, our greatest gift, should be the centre of our discipleship practices.

How can young people sustain an interest in theology, the Bible or even Christian living without first

encountering the God revealed in Jesus Christ?

In 1993, after completing my third year of working 70 to 80 hours a week in a youth ministry based on entertainment and whatever charisma I have, I was on the verge of burnout. A friend convinced me to attend a spiritual formation retreat led by Morton Kelsey. I knew that "spirituality" was popular, and I went hoping to pick up a few new gimmicks for my ministry. But after three days of silence, biblical meditation and other contemplative exercises, I experienced a life-changing conversion. During a meditative exercise on the Prodigal Son, I encountered an overwhelming Presence that enveloped me with love and acceptance. In that moment, I was the prodigal being welcomed home and celebrated.

My vision of youth ministry changed dramatically. If God is really present with us, then it made no sense to place myself or my programs at the centre of ministry. Instead of asking God to bless my programs, my job was to pay attention to how God is at work and then to follow. I became a disciple rather than a spiritual guru.

I rewrote our curricula, allowing space and time for God in each meeting. Including Bible study and theological reflection, every youth gathering featured prayer exercises and moments of contemplation. I finally understood that our programs had taught plenty of lessons about God but had failed to give kids the space, time and tools for experiencing God. How can young people sustain an interest in theology, the Bible or even Christian living without first encountering the God revealed in Jesus Christ? And how can adults help youth encounter God if they are not themselves regularly encountering God in prayer and reflection?

After three years of training in spiritual direction at San Francisco Theological Seminary and earning a master's degree in Christian spirituality, I implemented a contemplative approach to youth ministry at Sleepy Hollow Presbyterian Church in San Anselmo, California. I invited six adults identified by our 80-member congregation as people who had gifts in youth work. All six committed to engaging in youth ministry as a spiritual practice. Rather than being chaperones or committee members, we wanted to be an intentional spiritual

community. We met for an hour before the weekly youth group to share our lives, read Scripture, pray and discern our call. We understood that our own desire for God would be our greatest witness to our youth, and that this meeting would keep us mindful of our own discipleship.

For these gatherings of adult leaders, I structured a "liturgy" that sought a balance between contemplating God and acting on behalf of youth (love of God and love of neighbour). Our meetings begin with a ritual, such as lighting a candle or singing a song — some acknowledgement that we've gathered together in the presence of Christ. This is followed by a check-in time, a moment for each person to share immediate concerns, events and experiences. We continue with community confession, an opportunity to bring up any hurts or affirmations left over from the previous week.

The greatest part of the meeting is devoted to practice, a time to place ourselves before God and to pay attention to how the Spirit is at work in our individual lives and in our ministry. We alternate between two practices. In *lectio divina*, an ancient form of listening to God through Scripture, we often use a passage that reflects the theme for that evening's meeting. The passage is read twice, and each team member meditates on a word or phrase that seems to stand out. After a few minutes of silence, we share our words or images and discuss how they relate to our own lives of faith. In our second practice, openings and blocks, a form of the Ignatian awareness examen, each group member reflects in silence on the previous youth meeting and asks God to reveal those moments when the group was "open" or "blocked" to God's activity. This is followed by prayerful reflections by the rest of the group on how God is present within the ministry.

During the following question time, the members of the ministry team check their call, usually by discussing, "Given what we've heard and shared, what is God's calling for us this week?" On alternate weeks, the group does some longer-term planning rather than discussing the question. Finally, we close by seeking a deeper intimacy with the Holy Spirit through offering prayers of intercession and gratitude.

For further reflection and action

Invite a few people interested in youth ministry to come together to consider this article. What follows are a few questions to get the discussion going.

1. Review the youth ministries in your congregation. Do they fall into any of the three patterns the article describes: entertainment, charismatic youth leader or information-centred? What drawbacks from these approaches have you experienced?
2. Outline the approach the author now takes to youth ministry.
3. What did you learn from this article that you can implement in your congregation's youth ministry?

It soon became evident to us that placing youth ministry within the context of spiritual formation was healthier and more sustaining for both the leaders and the ministry. Our ministry team's weekly gathering allowed it to tend the fire of the Holy Spirit at work in our church. The prayer practices helped keep our focus on the movement of the Spirit rather than on cultural trends or our own anxieties. Our ministry began to flow out of our lives and our discernment of the Spirit rather than curricula. Gathered to nurture young people in faith, we soon realized that we were being transformed by this ministry. The most surprising development was that people began to make long-term commitments to working with youth; they attested to finding the ministry enriching rather than draining. At present, we have 19 people — a quarter of the church's membership — each devoting three hours a week to the ministry. Our whole church is experiencing renewal.

Most important, young people are being nourished in faith within the life of the congregation. Youth who come from the community rather than the church or who don't attend worship now encounter five to eight adults each week who represent the congregation. The young people's spiritual gifts are now recognized by the congregation, and they've been given space to share them. Five of our youth help design and lead music in worship, two serve on our denominational session and one serves as clerk of the session.

Each week at youth group, young people and adults together engage in various spiritual practices. For example, during one Lenten season, groups of adults and youth committed themselves to practising and sharing different forms of spiritual examination. One group fasted on Thursdays, members of another called each other every evening and engaged in the Ignatian awareness examen over the phone, another group committed itself to intercessory prayer, and members of a fourth wrote letters of gratitude each day. Our hope is that we are offering young people a variety of spiritual practices and intergenerational relationships that will sustain their faith into adulthood and give them a place from which they can counter the destructive forces of our culture.

Rather than entertaining them, we are inviting youth to be transformed. Rather than providing a solitary youth leader, we offer a community of disciples who seek to walk with youth toward a deeper intimacy with God. Rather than handing young people statements of faith, we give them the space and tools to recognize and act with the One who is beyond all theological formulations. We are claiming this work as a church, inviting young people into the intimacies of our hearts and rediscovering the indescribable power of the Risen Christ who forms, sustains and calls us by name, whatever our age may be. R

And how can adults help youth encounter God if they are not themselves regularly

encountering God in prayer and reflection?

Mark Yaconelli directs the youth ministry and spirituality project at San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, California.
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When God taught Sunday school

by Margaret Brouillette

Knowing things is OK. Doing them is better



It was the longest Sunday school lesson on record, not to mention the driest. That was no reflection on the teacher — he is the best. His pupils were among the worst.

God did not have a teacher's manual or flannelgraph when he taught the children of Israel in the desert. He delivered them from Egypt, gave them the law, set up the Tabernacle and the sacrifices and, then, made them wander for 40 years because of their unbelief. All that time, he was teaching them.

I will never part the Red Sea, but these are some of the things I *can* do with children:

1 Get their attention. When a voice came out of a cloud or a fire, people's ears perked up. No wonder. I, too, need to make sure someone is listening before I start talking.

2 Lay down the law. God wrote the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone. There was no question about what he expected of the people. The rules were clear and the consequences consistent.

3 Emphasize behaviour. Moses did not require that the people learn the Ten Commandments by heart before they crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land. He did not use word searches and crossword puzzles to help them memorize the names of the towns they should conquer. Knowing things is OK. Doing them is better. Loving God and loving people was the goal of God's teaching.

4 Use music. The children of Israel sang when they crossed the Red Sea. Experiencing God's power and salvation touches our emotions, and music is an effective way of expressing that. God taught the people another song before they left his desert class to enter Canaan. He knew the words people sing are remembered and can be passed on from generation to generation.

5 Show God's provision in real life. God did not give the children of Israel a miraculous catch of fish. They were in a desert. He did feed them manna and quail, and he prevented their sandals from wearing out. If I know what my students really care about, I can help them discover that God is working in their everyday lives.

6 Worship. The Tabernacle was the centre of community life. It was built according to rigorous standards. The reason is clear: "I the Lord your God am holy." God is awesome. Worship him. Do it often. Do it right.

7 Use art. Beauty and creativity remind us of God. The Tabernacle — a tent in the desert — was to be exquisitely fashioned by skilled workers. Art can lift us above the mundane and give us a glimpse of majesty.

8 Use object lessons. Killing sheep and doves and goats is a gruesome affair. And the Hebrew people did it on a regular basis, reminding them that sin is ugly and requires a sacrifice. John the Baptist made the connection when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world."

9 Use memorials. The children of Israel tended to forget, so God told them to save some reminders. They put the tablets of the law and Aaron's rod and a piece of manna in the Ark of the Covenant in order to tell their children and their grandchildren of all God's miracles in the desert. They also organized feasts and holidays to commemorate special events year after year. Using visible reminders of God's answers to prayer in the past is a good way of building faith for the future.

10 Look ahead. We, like Moses, are leading our students on a journey. We will all make mistakes along the way. Leaders will rise up. Certain rebels may fall by the wayside. But we are moving — moving toward the next step of being like Jesus Christ. And that, after all, is the Promised Land. R

Margaret Brouillette is a mother, a public school religious education teacher and a Sunday school director in Saint Luc, Que. Her first book, *Famous Jerks of the Bible*, is due to be released in the summer.

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Making the gospel sticky

Last month, we presented the first part of the editor's interview with Malcolm Gladwell. Malcolm grew up in Elmira, Ontario. He is a writer with The New Yorker *magazine in New York City and author of* The Tipping Point

RECORD: It is a long journey, in more ways than one, from growing up in Elmira, Ontario, to working on *The New Yorker* in New York City.

MALCOLM GLADWELL: That's true, but it also helps coming from a small town. For anyone who wants to draw conclusions, make diagnoses and analyse a culture — it gives you an outside, objective experience. A lot of what strikes me as peculiar or interesting would not have struck me that way if I had grown up in New York City and been familiar with it. What people moan about in small towns — their lack of connection with the big, sophisticated city — is an enormous advantage for me. It allows me to see it much more clearly. I received a very good education in Canada, much better than many of my peers. I think it was a privileged place to grow up. The example of the Mennonites is an important one: the idea that you can grow up as a group separate from the mainstream and still carry yourself with a certain dignity, tolerance and respect. That is not a trick that many minority groups or culturally separate groups are good at carrying off. That becomes a powerful example.

RECORD: You talk about your mother's influence?

GLADWELL: My mother writes clearly. Clarity is one of her guiding principles in expressing herself. That has been enormously important to me because I have chosen to write about things that are relatively complex. You can succeed at that only if you manage to render them clearly. What prevents many science writers from succeeding on a more popular level is that they can never do that. The technical world does not value clarity at all. That is one of the luxuries of being inside a closed culture. You do not need to be clear. It is not a criticism of that culture. It is the same as if you were sitting in with a group of ministers speaking in their own shorthand way. Clarity is an important and rare gift.

Ultimately, the real reason the world goes around is not money or politics but the strength of relationships between individuals

RECORD: Let me get back to some of the ideas in your book. Let's pretend you were put in charge of a small Presbyterian church in Canada. What would you attempt to apply from your book?

GLADWELL: There are several things one might do. One is to try to understand who within the congregation has these special social gifts: of being social, of knowledge and of being persuasive. I would encourage and reward those folk. They can be people who can become powerful building blocks for a religious movement. I would also try to define the kind of person I wanted to appeal to or the specific population I wanted to reach out to. I would try to think deeply about how to make social contact with that group. If you want to reach young married couples, you are going to need connectors who are young and married themselves — who have an entry into that world. What I am saying is to be aware of the social capital of the congregation, of what kind of social help is available. This is the sub-theme of the book. As a society, we are very aware of economic power, and conscious and aware of political power, but we sometimes wrongly denigrate social power. Ultimately, the real reason the world goes around is not money or politics but the strength of relationships between individuals. People who have the friend-

ship and respect of others have the most power of all. Understanding and appreciating that kind of power is extremely important.

***RECORD*:** I suppose John Wesley recognized this when he organized people into small groups.

GLADWELL: Yes, he was concerned about the integration of outsiders. He was actually creating a new movement, so it was important to educate the people in the culture of Methodism with its particular way of thinking about the church and what it ought to be. So he realized the group was a powerful force for inculturation and discipline. Especially in the early going, this is important — like having a football team of rookies. A veteran team does not need as much discipline but a team of rookies like Wesley had needed a strong and clear set of rules and standards. So he used the group to provide this.

***RECORD*:** You speak of the stickiness factor. In the church, we have a good product but have a hard time these days making it stick.

GLADWELL: Two things are odd about stickiness as a concept. The things that make it memorable are often different from what makes it fun. The second thing is that the things that make it sticky and memorable are not intuitive. Something is often memorable for a reason you never thought about. That is why the story I told about trying to get students to take a tetanus shot is so important. The leaders assumed the important factors were the gore of tetanus and how good the explanation of tetanus was. In the end, the only thing that mattered was whether they had a good map of the campus. Unless you systematically go out and test what makes something sticky, you may never discover its stickiness factor. People should be encouraged to experiment with different ways of communication and try to measure their effectiveness. And prepare to be surprised. I am always struck by how little experimentation there is among communicators. They always assume they know. But, often, you cannot know. Curiously, the only people who have really taken this message to heart are people in the direct mail business. They spend huge amounts of time experimenting and they never assume they know.



Malcolm Gladwell visiting his parents, Graham and Joyce Gladwell, at their home in Elmira, Ont.

***RECORD*:** When you wrote your book, did you consciously try to make its message sticky?

GLADWELL: That's interesting. I guess, but nothing unusual. I thought it was important that the book be short and have strong narratives. Narrative is the stickiest way to present information. Obviously, it needed to be clear. One of the things that came out of the studies of children's television is the importance of things being easy to comprehend. The minute they cease to understand, even a three- or four-year-old will stop watching television. When it becomes understandable again, they pay attention. Any part of the book that is not easy to understand is useless.

***RECORD*:** What applies to children also applies to adults?

GLADWELL: Oh, doubly! Some writers think you can lure people in with easy stuff and buy their attention for the hard stuff. But you can't. It's not a bank. You cannot build up credits to use later for the tough going. You lose them in the tough going irregardless of what you have done before. So I consciously avoid having dead spots. Science books often lure you in and, then, there are three or four chapters in the middle that are incredibly dense.

***RECORD*:** In the church, we often put all our efforts into making it rational and correct and fail to be sensitive to the context.

GLADWELL: I do think it is possible to speak in a language that is more familiar to people and consistent with the times without changing the message. The message may be timeless, but different periods have different ways of processing information. They have different cues and stress different concepts. The fundamental concerns of humans today are not different from those 2,000 years ago. And the needs of people have not changed. That kind of stuff is timeless. All that has changed is the way we have chosen to talk about it. There is no harm in making the language relevant.

***RECORD*:** What do you make of seeker-sensitive churches like Willow Creek in Chicago where everything is geared to the outsider.

GLADWELL: I think of the church in Washington I used to attend called Wash-

The importance of context

Some years ago, two Princeton University psychologists, John Darley and Daniel Batson, decided to conduct a study inspired by the biblical story of the Good Samaritan …

Darley and Batson met with a group of seminarians, individually, and asked each one to prepare a short, extemporaneous talk on a given biblical theme, then walk over to a nearby building to present it. Along the way to the presentation, each student ran into a man slumped in an alley, head down, eyes closed, coughing and groaning. The question was, who would stop and help? Darley and Batson introduced three variables into the experiment to make its results more meaningful. First, before the experiment even started, they gave the students a questionnaire about why they had chosen to study theology. Did they see religion as a means for personal and spiritual fulfilment? Or were they looking for a practical tool for finding meaning in everyday life? Then they varied the subject of the theme the students were asked to talk about. Some were asked to speak on the relevance of the professional clergy to the religious vocation. Others were given the parable of the Good Samaritan. Finally, the instructions given by the experimenters to each student varied as well. In some cases, as he sent the students on their way, the experimenter would look at his watch and say, "Oh, you're late. They were expecting you a few minutes ago. We'd better get moving." In other cases, he would say, "It will be a few minutes before they're ready for you, but you might as well head over now."

If you ask people to predict which seminarians played the Good Samaritan (and subsequent studies have done just this) their answers are highly consistent. They almost all say that the students who entered the ministry to help people and those reminded of the importance of compassion by having just read the parable of the Good Samaritan will be the most likely to stop. Most of us, I think, would agree with those conclusions. In fact, neither of those factors made any difference. "It is hard to think of a context in which norms concerning helping those in distress are more salient than for a person thinking about the Good Samaritan, and yet it did not significantly increase helping behaviour," Darley and Batson concluded. "Indeed, on several occasions, a seminary student going to give his talk on the parable of the Good Samaritan literally stepped over the victim as he hurried on his way." The only thing that really mattered was whether the student was in a rush. Of the group that was, 10 per cent stopped to help. Of the group who knew they had a few minutes to spare, 63 per cent stopped.

— from *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell. Used with permission.

You are a better person when you are not in a rush.

You are more likely to show someone courtesy, to stop if someone needs help. It's about knowing yourself and the fact that context and circumstance powerfully shape human behaviour

ington Community Fellowship. It appealed to a young, professional, cosmopolitan, sophisticated kind of person. The average age in the church was late 20s or early 30s. They spent a huge amount of effort on music, essentially making the music of the worship service contemporary. I realize this is obvious and trendy, but there is a clear logic to this approach. Music has played a more central role to the generation they were trying to appeal to than to any generation in history. Twenty-five-year-olds today have listened to more relatively sophisticated music, packaged popular music, than any generation before. By the time they are 25, they have listened to thousands of hours — when they walk on the street, when they drive their cars, when they go home at night. That is reality for them and where they get many of their cultural messages. This age doesn't get it from books or the means other generations relied upon. So we must make music central to the language of worship in a way that has never been the case for an earlier generation oriented toward the spoken word.

***RECORD*:** In some ways, your book is encouraging and positive because you say change is often possible by making only small changes. On the other hand, the story you tell about the seminarians and the Good Samaritan discourages a person like me.

GLADWELL: It can be seen as discouraging, but I don't find it discouraging at all. That story does not say the seminarians who stepped over the man in the street were bad people any more than I think the original story of the Good Samaritan means to say the Levite and the High Priest were bad people. What it says is that there are circumstances that all of us can get into where we are not ourselves. They can be relatively trivial circumstances. It says that part of what it means to be moral is to understand that about yourself. If even the holiest of people in a hurry do not act in a moral way, to be truly holy is to avoid situations where you are in a hurry. It suggests the task of being moral is an active task. To be moral does not mean that whatever situation you throw me into I make the right decision. It means I actually understand the situations that bring out my morality and actively try to be in that situation. I hope all those seminarians who stepped over the man when they were in a hurry will think about that

issue for the rest of their lives. Should I leave for the airport an hour or an hour and a half ahead of time? Well, there is a reason you leave an hour and half ahead of time even if you sit around in the airport for an extra half-hour. You are a better person when you are not in a rush. You are more likely to show someone courtesy, to stop if someone needs help. It's about knowing yourself and the fact that context and circumstance powerfully shape human behaviour. Part of what it means to control your behaviour is to appreciate that power and act accordingly. The Levite and High Priest were unaware of the consequences of being overscheduled people.

RECORD: How do you react if I say you seem to be an apologist for small-c conservatism?

GLADWELL: What do you mean exactly?

RECORD: You claim that many large and expensive social campaigns produce few results. It is often some small change made in the environment that provides the tipping point.

GLADWELL: You are correct. I am suspicious of programs that favour resources over thoughtfulness, faith and motivation. I also think that as people get more overloaded with information their capacity to respond to those large interventions diminishes. There is an information overload. We must be much smarter in the way we reach people when they are under that kind of pressure.

RECORD: What would you advise a seminarian to learn these days beyond the disciplines of theology?

GLADWELL: We have been talking about contemporary models of communication. When they graduate, they will be competing in the market-place with all kinds of other people trying to get their messages across. I think cross-discipline learning is valuable for everyone. Each discipline has something to offer to the other. It would be good if they were aware of the thinking about communication going on in other fields. R

Malcolm Gladwell's book *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* is published by Little, Brown and Company. You may also visit his Web site at www.gladwell.com.

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Let me be first to tell the town

(A woman released)

My God, this sun is hot!
And so tiring this journey to the well.
I could have used that other in the town,
But not brook the venom of that lot.

What do they really know?
Self-righteous, frauds, their noses in the air
And think themselves superior as they sneer,
Their men's eyes covert on me, sly and slow.

Oh, God, here at the well is one!
Will he be snide or pester with his guile?
Won't he leave me this quiet while?
No matter, I'll be polite and quickly gone.
But so kind his look! Can I be wrong?

Pardon! Sir, did you speak to me: woman?
And you will drink from out my cup
And that I am Samaritan you care not?
Dare I drop this guard — this suspicion?

Strange! I should be wary of his kind.
Where is my hate, that hunger to repay?
And this new longing to know those of my town!
Oh, such release!
What! Can he also read my mind?

My God! He knows my secrets, who I am,
My life's unyielding desperation.
And such compassion in those eyes!
Can this be He — who is to come?
Oh, please! Let me be first to tell the town.

— Lenn Chow is a member of Richmond Church in Richmond, B.C.

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What to wear?

by Joseph C. McLelland

Whatever garment clergy wear, it carries symbolic meaning

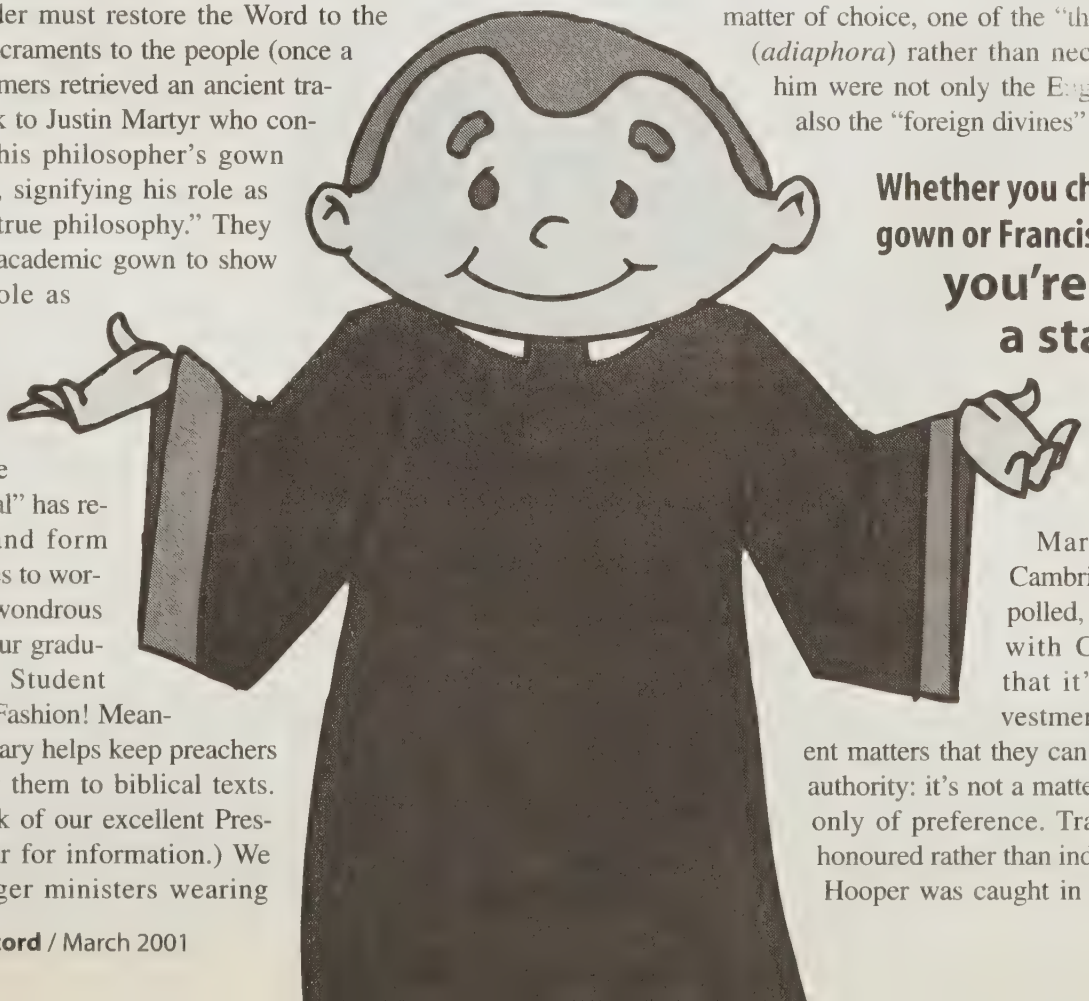
Clergy come in all manner of dress these days. Gone is the black Geneva gown with clerical collar and bands, relieved somewhat by academic hood. Instead, our eyes are treated to a wild variety of shapes and colours, topped with home-grown symbols on scarves and stoles. Not that this is all to the bad. The "goodoldays" could be a tad boring — all those black gowns, and beginning every service with "Holy, Holy, Holy." So, now, we have two styles on view, apparently contradictory.

The tradition from Geneva and Edinburgh was clear: a Minister is ordained to "Word and Sacraments," meaning one who "serves" the two forms of the Word of God. One, read from the Bible and preached from the pulpit; the other, made visible in the two sacraments instituted by Christ. The logic was compelling: the old Mass had hidden God's Word under ceremonies dominated by priests, and restricted the Eucharist to them; a new order must restore the Word to the clergy and the sacraments to the people (once a year). The Reformers retrieved an ancient tradition going back to Justin Martyr who continued to wear his philosopher's gown after conversion, signifying his role as teacher of the "true philosophy." They chose the black academic gown to show their primary role as Teaching Elders.

Now, "hear the other side," as Augustine used to say. The "liturgical renewal" has restored colour and form and festive themes to worship — what a wondrous sight to behold our graduates jump from Student Grunge to High Fashion! Meanwhile, the lectionary helps keep preachers honest, recalling them to biblical texts. (Consult the back of our excellent Presbyterian calendar for information.) We see many younger ministers wearing apparently alien garments borrowed from Roman Orders (i.e., that deny the Reformed understanding of ministry) — and, yet, they fulfil the Reformed office with excellence.

So, maybe, I'm making too much of the freestyle garment industry. Yet, my interest in symbols tweaks my curiosity, to say the least. I recall the notorious "vestment controversy" in England when Archbishop Cranmer was trying to reform the Church of England. John Hooper was slated for a bishopric but refused to be consecrated if he had to wear the required vestments. He was supported by the left-wing Jan Laski, Polish nobleman and minister of the Strangers' Church in London, and by the "Swiss party" of students from Zurich. His case went all the way to the Privy Council — church and state being hand-in-hand through the Act of Uniformity. He won, and was duly consecrated, but the debate holds an interesting lesson for us.

Hooper's argument was that what clergy wear is a matter of choice, one of the "things indifferent" (*adiaphora*) rather than necessary. Against him were not only the English bishops but also the "foreign divines" then resident — Peter Martyr in Oxford and Martin Bucer in Cambridge. Many were polled, and they (along with Calvin) argued that it's just because vestments are indifferent matters that they can be regulated by authority: it's not a matter of conscience, only of preference. Tradition must be honoured rather than individual taste. So Hooper was caught in a cleft stick: he



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insisted it didn't matter what he wore, therefore, he should not object to wearing the prescribed garments!

Today, individual freedom has become its own authority. What seems lost is the fact that every garment carries symbolic meaning — e.g., the Roman Missal describes the Alb, Stole, etc. as "garments of sacrifice." Even those who reject gowns completely adopt business attire popularized by middle-class "men in grey suits." You can't win! Whether you choose Geneva gown or Franciscan robe, you're making a statement. The distinctive robes of various Orders (designed for Brothers and Abbots, not Preachers) bring a history and meaning with them, even when Presbyterians don them.

My point is that the Geneva-Edinburgh tradition identified the wearer as a servant of God's Word, in the line of philosopher and "doctor" (which simply meant "teacher" until the medical profession took it over). Other choices borrow from more priestly traditions, playing down the role of Teaching Elder. Or is it "more *pastoral*"? I notice the unhappy trend to displace "minister" — even in official documents — with "pastor." Surely this, too, is a sign of the times: no longer Teaching Elder or congregational Rabbi, the minister has become spiritual adviser to a "flock," its resident guru. Now that "spirituality" is the in-word, it's no wonder our clergy — already confused by the chaotic state of modern theology in a so-called "post-modern" world of relativism and mere rights — should follow suit (pun intended).

What to wear? If it's a matter of "things indifferent," it really doesn't matter. As Augustine (again!) said about ethics, "Love, and do what you choose." Just so: Preach the Gospel, and wear what you like … *unless* it signals that Word is less important than ceremony, or "prophetic preaching" than "pastoral duties." If it does, it clearly means a lack of clarity. And that's a tragedy when so much depends on getting our act together for a compelling witness to a world suffering from a famine of the Word of God. R

Joseph C. McLelland is emeritus professor of McGill University and The Presbyterian College, Montreal, and a contributing editor of this magazine.

PWSDevelopments

a newsletter of Presbyterian World Service & Development

Spring 2001



Reflections from a Food Study Tour

On December 1, 2001 ten Canadians—four from Alberta, two from Manitoba, one from Saskatchewan, three from Ontario—boarded a plane for Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The nine farmers and myself were beginning a fourteen day journey to see the impact of Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) programs on communities in Honduras and Nicaragua after Hurricane Mitch.

Perhaps the hardest part of this trip occured on the second day, when we visited the camps where long warehouses, intended to be temporary shelters, still housed refugees more than two years after the hurricane. While final stages of housing were set to begin shortly, some of the residents



Some still wait for housing in Honduras.

Two Earthquakes

Within two weeks, both El Salvador and India were devastated by two massive earthquakes. Within hours, PWS&D partners were providing food and shelter materials to the survivors.

India

The road from Ahemadabad to Bhuj in northern Gujarat is not to be travelled lightly. On either side of the highway, whole villages and towns are reduced to rubble. Funeral pyres burn throughout the day.

The Churches Auxillary for Social Action (CASA) is busy distributing food and shelter materials in small communities far off this road. CASA has targetted 35,000 of the region's poorest citizens in remote villages like Zikdi and Lodai—the closest communities to the epicentre. The death toll in these communities was much lower than in the large cities—highrise and multi-story buildings are not common—but almost every single house was destroyed and these communities are far from the hub of international aid centered in Bhuj and Ahmadabad. The blankets and tarpaulins being distributed are particularly valuable as



photo: Action by Churches Together

temperatures drop as low as 3°C at night. As Kohli Valiby, grandmother to seven, gathers her provisions she comments "Well, at least we are alive."

PWS&D is committed to helping survivors at this difficult time through our partners CASA, and Action by Churches Together (ACT). ACT reports that rebuilding in this region will be a challenge. After three years of drought, harvests were already low, and the quake has now destroyed factories and other sources of employment.

El Salvador



photo: Action by Churches Together

Crowds of screaming people swarm the supply truck as it drives into the town of Tacuba, in the western region of El Salvador. "I can't slow down," the driver says. "If I do, they will take our cargo from us, and the emergency assistance won't be distributed to everyone."

One of the greatest challenges in emergency relief work is ensuring that help reaches everyone. PWS&D's partners are committed to working in regions and with people that have been overlooked. Articio Gomez, a farmer, still had a shovel in his hand as he arrived at the distribution point in Tacuba. "I have been praying for something, or someone to arrive," Gomez, says "we thought we had been forgotten. This situation is unlike anything I've confronted before. Just the fact that someone has made an effort to be with us, to support us, means more than words can describe."

a time to change





From a distance, this community looks like any other. But at closer inspection, it is apparent that only old women and children live here. Gambaga Outcast Home, as this community is called, is a place of refuge in Northern Ghana for women who have been banished from their communities as "witches". The Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) is working toward a day when this community will not exist—a day when all of these women will return home, and women will no longer be cast out of their communities as "witches".

The task facing the PCG is not easy. Women have been exiled as "witches" in Northern Ghana since the seventeenth century. This practice continues today in communities with high rates of poverty and illiteracy. The PCG has begun tackling the issue by working with women and children currently living in the Gambaga Outcast Home.



Gambaraana Yahay Wuni, Gambaga

Women are usually accused of witchcraft after several instances of death or illness in the community, often caused by drought or disease. Those accused are usually poor, illiterate and old. Grey hair, wrinkles and/or "physical defects" such as a blind eye, loss of teeth, a limp, or humped back are all believed to be common characteristics of "witches". Women who are widows or childless are particularly susceptible to accusation. Behind the accusation is often something else—a jealousy, an argument, an offence—but that is rarely discussed.

An accused woman is often jeered, beaten and stoned before being cast out of the community. Once exiled she must find a Gambaraana to exorcise the witchcraft. The Gambaraana, known as "the custodian of witches", is said to have supernatural powers that can make the witch harmless. Once the "witch" has been "cleansed", she is supposed to be able to return home. However most communities will not accept the women back. And so the women erect small huts at the "outcast home", accepting the protection of the Gambaraana. Housing at the outcast home is very poor. There are few ways to earn an income, and water is hard to access. Some are accompanied by their children or grandchildren, who have little chance of obtaining an education. It is a very difficult life.

above left: women in the outcast home sell wood to earn an income; **right:** three women in the outcast home.

In Gambaga, The Presbyterian Church of Ghana's program has been helping communities, community chiefs and district assemblies break this "outdated" practice through education and rehabilitation. When they convince a community to accept a woman back, the PCG helps the woman reintegrate back into the community. Four years ago, there were 150 women at the Gambaga outcast home. Now, with the support of this program there are only 108. The PCG also recognizes that some of the women will never be accepted back into their communities. So they are also helping improve housing, water and sanitation facilities, and developing more income earning opportunities in Gambaga. They have also begun a program to educate the children who live there. These children face a difficult future as they grow up under the stigma of being related to a witch. The education program not only teaches academics but also unveils the superstitions surrounding witchcraft.

The PCG believe that "where there is no vision, people perish". With the support of partners like PWS&D, the PCG is making its vision of stopping the practice of accusing and banishing "witches", a reality.

PWS&D is supporting the Gambaga Rehabilitation Program with a grant of $10,000 in 2001.

Partners make a difference

continued from page one...

were very discouraged. "I saw my son washed away by the river. He hit his head on a rock and died. Now I wonder whether I will ever leave this place," one woman said, motioning to her small space in one of the warehouses. The camps reminded us that rebuilding after a disaster like Mitch can take years.

We did see signs of hope further down the road where people were living in brand new strong, cement-block houses, built with Canadian support. Many, who had never owned their own homes before, now held titles to their land and home. Designed to be earthquake resistant and withstand future storms, these houses were often much better than the housing people lived in prior to the Hurricane. In addition to building houses, communities used "food for work" to construct quality water wells, repair roads and build soil conservation structures for farming. Again and again, as we travelled throughout Honduras and Nicaragua it was clear that Canadian grains accomplished much more than just feeding empty bellies. It was evident that the food aid complemented the long term development work Canadian churches were supporting in the region.

One highlight was visiting the housing project in Nicaragua supported by PWS&D's partner, the Center of Life and Hope for Women and Children (CIVEMN). Everyone was impressed by the faith and dedication of the workers, and what they had accomplished.





Houses in Nicaragua built by PWS&D's partner, CIVEMN.

Travelling on a food study tour with nine Canadian farmers was an interesting experience. Each night we paused for a time of reflection and devotion. Everyone struggled with the many challenges the people we met face every single day, as they struggle to feed and shelter their families. We were very impressed with the dedication of the partners who work day and night to make a difference in very diffiuclt circumstances.

by Karen Plater,
PWS&D Resource &
Communications Coordinator

PWSDevelopments is an educational resource produced twice a year by **Presbyterian World Service & Development** with financial support from the **Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)**.
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Celebrating International Women's Day



In Madurai, India, many women rarely express their opinions in their homes, let alone in community forums. They want to change the high levels of poverty and domestic violence in their communities, but many don't know how. International Women's Day gives them an opportunity to express their views. Each March 8th, PWS&D's partner, the Madurai Non-Formal Education Center (MNEC) helps bring together 10,000 women for a 2KM march around Madurai. Doctors, scientists, writers, and other professionals unite with women from the poorest communities for this common cause. For many women this is the only time they express their views in public.

The women have found they can make an impact. One year they stopped hospitals from charging an entrance fee for visitors. Another year they helped change laws which permitted only men to hold titles to land. This year the women hope to encourage the government to crack down on the sale of illicit "arrack" (a very strong alcohol), which is contributing to domestic violence. J.Helen, coordinator of MNEC's women's programs, believes this is extremely valuable work, as "women's issues are common issues for all."

MNEC receives support from PWS&D's CIDA program.

Focus: Sierra Leone

15 year old Thomas tries to hide his crutch as he tells his story. In 1998 he was captured by the rebels in Sierra Leone. While he didn't have to fight, he did carry loot for them for two years. One day, Thomas fell into an ambush and a grenade injured his leg. He later escaped, and arrived at a camp for internally displaced people run by the Christian Council of Sierra Leone (CCSL). At the camp Thomas was reunited with his parents, and he is now attending the camp's school. Thomas describes his dreams for the future, "I don't want to be a soldier, I want to become a doctor".

Thomas's story is all too common in war-torn Sierra Leone. In nine years of civil war more than 150,000 Sierra Leoneans have been killed and thousands more have been beaten, abducted, maimed and raped. The human rights abuses and atrocities are uncomprehensible.

Thomas is getting a chance at his dream through the Christian Council of Sierra Leone. The CCSL is currently managing two of the largest camps for internally displaced people. The CCSL is taking a leading role in education and trauma healing programs, and is also helping people who have returned to their communities rebuild normal lives. They have distributed seeds and tools to help people grow food to support themselves.

By supporting PWS&D you are helping youth like Thomas have brighter futures. In 2000/2001 PWS&D is supporting the work of CCSL with a grant of $85,000 through Action by Churches Together.









photos by Action by Churches Together

A plea for sponsors

Try to imagine living in Canada, knowing that your brother, sister, parents, niece or nephew have fled atrocious human rights abuses and are living in precarious circumstances in a refugee camp. Imagine that you have only recently come to Canada, you are working hard to support your family, and you cannot come up with the resources to sponsor the family members yourself.

"I don't want to be a soldier, I want to be a doctor"

Thomas, 15 years old

This is the situation many Sierra Leoneans living in Canada are currently facing. They have identified over 3,000 family members living in refugee camps waiting to be sponsored, and are appealling to Canadians to become sponsors. Sierra Leoneans in Canada are willing to help church groups with the sponsorship and resettlement processes. The Canadian government has agreed to expedite private sponsorship cases from Sierra Leone, using a special process to get the families to Canada. To help sponsoring groups the government is also funding a National Co-ordinator and five Regional Co-ordinators through the Sierra Leone Refugee Sponsorship Project.

Congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Canada can help by privately sponsoring refugees. As sponsors, congregations are responsible to provide fimancial and social support for the family for one year. It is a significant, but rewarding commitment. At PWS&D's recent consultation on refugees, many testified that there is nothing like giving a person a new beginning in life.

If you are interested in sponsoring refugees, please contact PWS&D.

Photos

(left to right from the top)

1) Thomas in a camp for internally displaced people managed by the Christian Council in Sierra Leone (CCSL).

2) Women in the camp.

3) Marie Gborie, aged 60, does gardening in a camp run by CCSL in Bo. Her arm was hit by a bullet when she had to flee from the rebels.

4) Seeds distributed by the CCSL help returnees grow food.

Jonathan Sherbino

Livingstone is dead

Personal reflections on the changing nature of medical mission

Within the church, there exists an ethos that presupposes the church should be actively involved in what has been termed "mission." Until the 16th century, the term mission was used in reference to the Trinity — the sending of the Son by the Father, and the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Son and the Father. In the modern era, mission has come to encompass the proclamation of the gospel and the accompanying social and economic development of the recipients of the gospel.

The past efforts of Dr. Livingstone in Africa, Dr. McClure in China and Dr. Buchanan in India served as the prototype of what is traditionally termed "medical mission." However, cultural changes necessitate a review of medical missionary practice. Commentary regarding past missionary practices is not the intent of this article; rather, I will attempt to re-examine the role of western Christian doctors in the Two-Thirds World and provide a brief overview of new ideas.

Should we even be involved?

For those outside the church's circle of influence, the assumption that the economically blessed should intercede on behalf of the impoverished is not immediately apparent. From a purely neo-Darwinist perspective, a self-defeating culture should not be economically or politically propped up by external forces simply to preserve the status quo. Such a mind-set declares cultures incapable of independent survival should follow the patterns of history, in which innumerable societies disappeared with changing political and economic forces.

Humanist philosophers take a slightly more compassionate view. Several ethicists have argued that a child dying from dysentery should be left to die in a country unable to provide basic rehydration solutions. For external sources to provide rehydration solutions and, thus, spare the child's life is to condemn that individual to a prolonged impoverished existence with all of its associated tragedies. Such ethicists perceive an early death as more merciful.

"The church is not a refuge from the world, but exists for the sake of a world that is hurting" — *Augustine*

In contrast with these views, the Christian response to the church's involvement is an overwhelming "Yes!" Luke commences the ministry of Jesus with this recitation from Isaiah:

God's Spirit is on me;
he's chosen me to preach the Message
of good news to the poor,
Sent me to announce pardon to prisoners
and recovery of sight to the blind,
To set the burdened and battered free,
to announce, "This is God's year to
act!" (Luke 4:18-19, *The Message*)

The gospel screams for a loosening of the bonds of captivity, both material and immaterial. Sadly, within some churches, we have forgotten our missionary heritage as our "personal relationship with God" has led to an increasingly inward perspective. Therefore, we must reawaken and redress the cries from our world.

When we examine the history of western missionary activities in relation to the Two-Thirds World, we discover that, in addition to characteristic evangelistic activities (i.e., church planting, Bible translation), the church has also been involved in development work. Development has come to encompass the activities (undertaken by both secular and religious organizations) that seek to alleviate poverty, address political injustice, provide education, etc.

Is the sole aim of medical mission the betterment of health and development goals? No, we have an overriding "soul" aim, manifest through both the action and proclamation of God's love. David Bosch, a Protestant missiologist, writes: "Neither a secularized church (that is, a church which concerns itself only with this-worldly activities and interests) nor a separatist church (that is, a church which involves itself only in soul-saving and preparation of converts for the hereafter) can faithfully articulate the *missio Dei*." It is within this framework that medical mission is situated. To divide it into pure development work or to view it as merely a means to evangelism is to draw a false dichotomy that does not fully represent the *missio Dei* — the redemptive revelation of God to his creation.

New roles?

What, then, is the role of a western doctor in the Two-Thirds World? Such discussion needs to be predicated upon the realization that: 1. western medical



Jonathan Sherbino at Jobat Christian Hospital in India.

Kimberly Reid

training is largely irrelevant in the Two-Thirds World, 2. language and culture are natural barriers that require a substantial investment of time (significant because the current generation anticipates five to six career changes), 3. even the poorest nations are producing physicians in national medical schools.

Nine roles are briefly introduced. The first four relate to education; the next four to clinical practice; and the remaining role addresses economics.

1. Research

Research is the driving force within western medicine. The same cannot be said for nations in the Two-Thirds World. Lack of fiscal support, the diversion of overwhelming medical problems, educational models based on rote learning, and an absence of research experience — all contribute to this void. Thus, medical issues unique to tropical or impoverished regions lack objective research-based evidence. Medical practice in these countries is based on western models and unsubstantiated theories. The history of medicine is replete with warnings against presuppositions. Thus, a prime role for western physicians is the initiation and collaboration on research projects designed to answer pertinent health questions of the Two-Thirds World.

2. Continuing education

Medicine is a progressive discipline. However, the concept of continuing medical education (a requirement for licensure in Canada) is foreign in many areas of the Two-Thirds World. To persist in medical practices considered outdated or potentially harmful is a situation demanding attention. I do not intend to discuss the differing merits of various education models, but simply stress the importance of western agencies establishing long-term relationships that foster continuing education with their partners.

3. Mentoring

There is a great need for established physicians to mentor younger colleagues in areas of faith, character and Christian leadership. The mentoring role is not a formalized task; rather, it is a by-product of established long-term relationships. It is presumptuous to assume the mentoring role flows only from West to East. Yet, mature western physicians can fill a mentoring need in the Two-Thirds World where access to role models is limited.

4. Strategic planning/administration

Doctors, regardless of nation, are notoriously deficient in these areas. However, with narrow margins for error in the Two-Thirds World, poor planning and resource utilization have a profound impact. Western physicians versed in strategic planning can play a beneficial consulting role. Also, western doctors, well-versed in the "language" of grant writing can liaise with funding agencies and assist in accessing western resources.

5. Telemedicine

The advent of telemedicine could potentially revolutionize medical mission. Rather than packing for an overseas stint, a western physician could consult with an overseas hospital lacking specialist resources one afternoon per week. Although the infrastructure costs are currently high, access to this technology will only increase with time. Furthermore, telemedicine costs are comparatively lower than placing a western doctor overseas. What is more, telemedicine allows medical centres access to a range of specialists.

6. Disaster medicine

Disasters resulting from environmental crises or war often overwhelm a country's medical infrastructure. Rapid response teams — the acute provision of foreign personnel — can assist in quelling the tide of medical needs. It should be noted that mainly administrators, engineers or physicians trained in disaster management are of significant value in such settings. Clinicians have limited, secondary roles.

7. Specialized surgical care

The need for highly sub-specialized surgical care in the Two-Thirds World will always persist. Yet, specialized surgical disciplines require a large catchment population. Thus, remote placements do not maximize the cost of full-time specialist surgeons. However, surgical conditions not requiring acute care (i.e., cataracts, cleft palates) are amenable to periodic, visiting western specialist surgeons.

8. Short-term relief (locums)

The physician working in the Two-Thirds World is overwhelmed and overworked. Inadequate infrastructure quickly consumes the physician, frequently leading to burnout. Provided that language and scope of practice are sufficiently addressed, a western doctor is in a unique position to donate time and provide temporary job relief to overworked counterparts seeking vacation or study time.

9. Debt relief

The link between economics and health is firmly established. Servicing international debt, diversion of medical

budgets (i.e., to military agendas) and inequitable trade barriers hamper a nation's ability to provide adequate health care. Sadly, illness and disease strips the economy of vitality, perpetuating a downward economic spiral. Perhaps the most crucial role for western physicians (or anyone, for that matter) is to lobby international and national bodies for economic relief. Trite action plans that comment on health yet fail to address economic issues are impotent. Was Jubilee 2000 a start? Yes! Is it the end? No!

The mission hospital

Mission hospitals, the point of practice for many western doctors, are now flanked by government hospitals. What sets mission hospitals apart? They were established in areas where: 1. underserviced medical needs existed, 2. people were denied health care because of cultural stigmas or financial limitations, 3. the gospel had not been introduced. Changing demographics around the world have necessitated changing roles for current mission hospitals. Perhaps, the new mission hospital, in remaining faithful to its roots, will be located in urban centres, not rural zones, caring for the displaced. Perhaps, mission hospitals will now focus on victims of the new "leprosy": HIV. Perhaps, the new mission hospital will now be found in the West, a palliative care centre protecting people from a death-obsessed culture.

Summing it up

Is this the final word? Well, the aims and means of the modern missionary movement appeared appropriate to each generation. As recently as 1980, our efforts seemed on track. World Health Organization slogans such as "Health for All by 2000" still decorate some of the hospitals in which I have worked. Thus, with a sense of humility, we move forward, seeking God's direction. Without this attitude, our efforts (albeit even beneficial programs) become a contemporary Tower of Babel. R

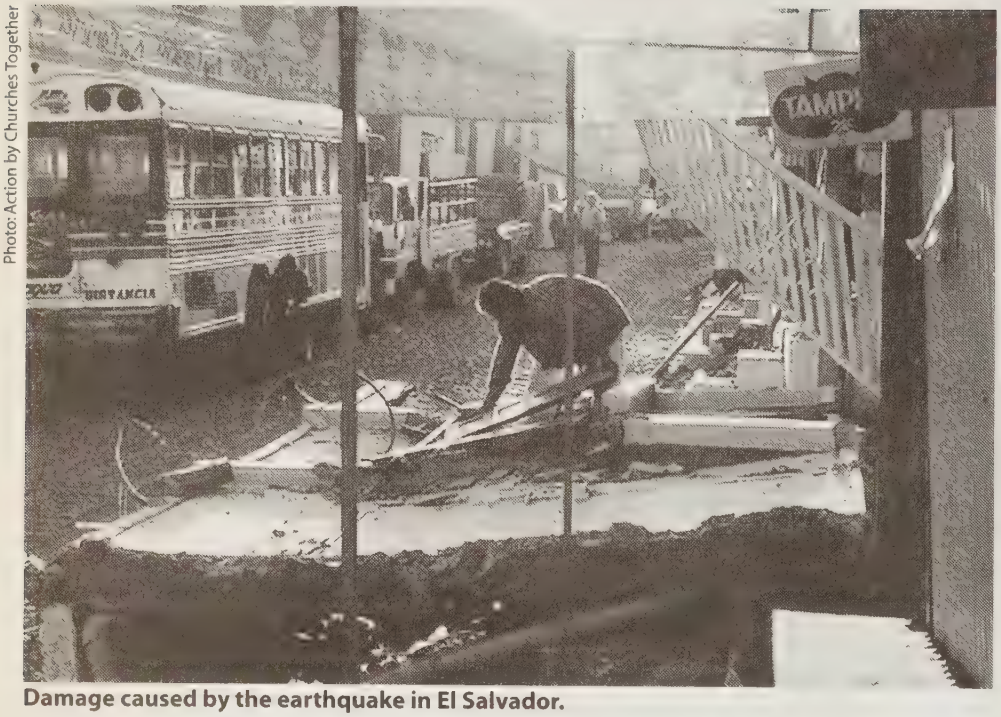
Jonathan Sherbino served as a volunteer with International Ministries in Malawi, India and Nepal. He is currently completing his M.D.

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PWS&D responds to victims of earthquakes

Photo: Action by Churches Together



Damage caused by the earthquake in El Salvador.

For almost a minute on January 13, at 11:33 a.m. local time, an earthquake measuring 7.9 on the Richter Scale shook the coast of El Salvador. Recent reports listed at least 700 dead (possibly, as many as 1,200), 3,000 injured and 45,000 homeless.

Presbyterian World Service and Development has opened a special account to receive donations to support relief and rehabilitation work. It is communicating with partners (the Women's Institute and the Federation of Baptist Churches) to determine the best way to help the survivors. PWS&D is also supporting the work of Action by Churches Together, an alliance of 200 churches and aid agencies world-wide.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada staff in the area are safe. Jim and Brenda Patterson, based in Santa Ana, report they are well. They say several houses in Santa Ana have been damaged. Ken and Kennis Kim are safe in Guatemala, although they felt the quake in their home.

Thirteen days after the earthquake in El Salvador, one of equal intensity (7.9 on the Richter Scale) hit the State of Gujarat, India, with even more devastating results. The quake collapsed high-rises in cities, wiped out villages and left millions homeless. Estimates of the death toll exceed 20,000, with another 35,000 seriously injured. Those figures were expected to rise.

PWS&D responded immediately to the quake with grants of $5,000 to Action by Churches Together and to the Church of North India.

PWS&D has heard from International Ministries staff in India, including Pauline Brown and Margaret Vanderzweerde. All are safely outside of the immediate earthquake area and trying to see what they can do to help.

Anyone wanting to help can send a donation directly to: Presbyterian World Service & Development, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7. E-mail: pwsd@presbyterian.ca. Web site: www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd/. Credit card donations can be made by calling: 416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301. Donations can also be made through church offerings by marking your gift "PWS&D — India Earthquake." (Ask the church treasurer to forward it quickly.) Income tax receipts will be issued.

Action by Churches Together is supplying relief kits for people in the affected area. All materials are obtained in India. One relief kit costs $38 and includes:

- 7 kg. rice
- 2 kg. flour
- 1 kg. lentils
- 1 litre cooking oil
- match box and candles
- clothing for men and women
- a blanket
- cooking utensils
- a lantern
- a tarpaulin

A new name, a new mission

The congregation of Knox Church, Windsor, Ontario, saw the writing on the wall. A declining membership with the youngest member in his 60s told the story. Last November, a closing service was conducted by the Presbytery of Essex-Kent.

For two weeks before the service, the elders of Knox were invited to pray daily about God's plan for the future of the church. When they convened, the answer was positive: close the old and make room for the new.

The presbytery appointed a special committee with a broad age representation. Convener Rev. Hugh Appèl says it is amazing how the committee has united together on the project. "No doubt about it," he says, "Christ has a super plan for us."

The presbytery has agreed to change the name of the former Knox Church to University Community Church. The emphasis is on the University of Windsor since the church is located next to the campus. Outreach will include the community around it. A profile has been drawn up and sent to Ministry and Church Vocations at the national church offices.

"The intent is to look into different possibilities in a contemporary style and fellowship," says Appèl. "People from all walks of life should feel a part of such an atmosphere, where Jesus Christ is lived and shared."

The rights of the roundtable: a discussion on human rights and democratic development

On a crisp, fall day in November, 35 people from the Synod of British Columbia gathered at Goward House in Victoria. Their purpose was to explore "The Role of the Church in Civil Society at the Beginning of the Third Millennium," in particular through support for human rights and democratic development.

The roundtable discussion was organized by a virtual committee, which met by phone, fax and e-mail: convener Rev. Brian Crosby (Trinity Church, Victoria), co-ordinator Dawn McLean (St. Andrew's, Victoria), Rev. Wayne Stretch (pastoral and program director), Rev. Fred Speckeen (Kelowna) and Rev. Alfred Lee and Michael Hwang (Presbytery of Western Han-Ca). Most met for the first time at the event.

Rev. Glenn Inglis and his colleague, Billy Mayaya, both from the Projects Office of Blantyre Synod, Malawi, set the stage. At a public event on Friday night, Inglis focused on the story of Peter's confession in the Gospel of Mark. Like Peter, he said, we often know who Jesus is but are mistaken in what Jesus calls us to do. So we neglect important issues such as human rights and democratic development. Many of Jesus' public pronouncements, he pointed out, had strong economic themes. Jesus was an activist for the poor, the least, the last and the lost, he said.

Mayaya described the strong social context of the church's role in Malawi, from David Livingstone's desire to end the slave trade to the current program of Civic, Voter and Human Rights Education. He also spoke of the many obstacles to democracy and human rights in Malawi: the conservatism of a church that opposes education on the use of condoms while countless young Christians are infected by the HIV virus every month; the poverty and illiteracy of much of the population that makes them easy prey for the false promises of corrupt politicians; the impact of external debt that has reduced government expenditures in health and education in order to devote a quarter of Malawi's income to debt reduction.



Rev. Fred Speckeen (left), Candace Stretch, Paul Lan and Michael Rynveld at the roundtable discussion held in Victoria. (Photo: Dawn McLean)

Three panelists, Rev. John Steele, Maeve Lydon and Fred Speckeen, added insights from their experiences in Burundi, Canada and Central America. In small groups, participants explored the need for courage to face justice issues in Canada and the importance of identifying issues in which to put one's heart and soul.

The roundtable was one of a series entitled "Building Global Community: Challenges for the Church in the Third Millennium," a project of the International Affairs Committee of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Rev. Carol Smith, convener of the International Affairs Committee, believes the roundtables (the first was held in Waterloo, Ontario) have been opportunities "to integrate the Christian faith with global concerns."

One challenge keeps coming to the forefront for the committee, Smith says: how can we be more effective in encouraging congregations to become better equipped to understand and respond to global justice issues? "In our system, the presbytery level has the most potential of affecting congregations," she says. "From the enthusiasm and suggestions of the participants, I am very hopeful that the roundtables will help us move forward in our particular task." (*From a report by Gail Turner*)

Next roundtables:

Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba: Valleyview Church, Calgary, March 30-31. For information, contact Janette Mackie, (403) 282-3014, lmackie@cadvision.com

Synod of Atlantic Provinces: Camp Geddie, Merigomish, N.S., April 20-21. For information, contact: Rev. Donald MacKay, (902) 755-3199, dwmackay.atspcc@ns.sympatico.ca, or Karen MacKay (902) 925-2784

Or, contact Justice Ministries: 1-800-619-7301

briefly noted

Mission staff arrivals: *Beth and Jack McIntosh*, from Japan, mid-March.

Church offices arrivals: *Dwight Browns*, as laity co-ordinator for year three of the FLAMES initiative, half-time contract position, Feb. 1, 2001, to Jan. 31, 2002.

New congregation: *Seoul Presbyterian Church*, Burnaby, B.C. (Presbytery of Western Han-Ca), constituted Feb. 2.

Deaths: *Rev. K. C. (Cal) Doka*, Jan. 17, in White Rock, B.C.

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Love is like a fine old violin



Anne Marie and Daniel Regehr (left), Jake and Margaret Vanderzweerde and the Martin Chikie violin.

In the interior of Bihar, India, there is a minister in charge of 16 small, rural congregations. His music team consists of dancers, drummers and singers. The instruments used are indigenous, except for a violin played by the minister.

When International Ministries overseas staff members Margaret and Jake Vanderzweerde first met the pastor, they noticed his violin didn't sound quite right. The reason was soon obvious. The violin had been damaged, patched and painted. Even worse, whenever the strings broke, the minister had been forced to fashion new ones from stripped electrical wire. Jake resolved to look for a replacement violin when he returned to Canada.

Back in Canada, Jake had a conversation one day with Anne Marie Regehr, a music teacher, violinist and harpist, and organist at St. David's Church, St. David's, Ontario. He told her about the broken violin. The following week, Regehr called the Vanderzweerdes to tell them she had a violin for India. Their joy turned into astonishment when they learned it was made by the late Martin Chikie of Queenston, Ontario — one of more than 200 unique and valuable fiddles he created. The one bound for India was made with wood from a black walnut tree in Pennsylvania. When Chikie began to carve the violin, he found a bullet in the log, later dated by an archivist to 1774, the time of the American Revolution. The fingerboard was made from polished rosewood. The violin had been a gift to Regehr from her husband, Daniel. Together, they decided to give it to the Indian minister.

On December 24, Regehr played the Chikie violin during the offertory at Stamford Church, Niagara Falls. The violin was then dedicated by Rev. Laurie McKay-Deacon and presented by Anne Marie to Jake.

Initially, Regehr had planned on giving a practise instrument used by students. However, as she thought more about the gift, she decided it should be a valuable violin, one with a story, one that meant a lot to her. A worthy gift on the eve of Jesus' birth. (*from an account by Margaret Vanderzweerde*)

Presbyterians Sharing ... down, but up

A total of $8,599,666 was received from congregations for *Presbyterians Sharing*... last year, a drop of about $1,000 from 1999.

Yet, "this is very good news," says Annemarie Klassen, associate secretary for Stewardship and Education for Mission, "since, because of a decrease in the formula on which suggested allocations are based, we did not know how we would end the year." Furthermore, she adds, the amount received from individuals increases the total by close to $100,000, making it even better news.

Canadian inter-church coalitions forced to restructure

Faced with at least a 20 per cent cut in funding, a group of 10 Canadian inter-church coalitions has been forced into a dramatic restructuring of operations, involving program cuts and staff lay-offs. The need to restructure has been given additional impetus by the fact the Anglican Church of Canada, until now the largest single contributor to the coalitions (contributing $300,000 in 1999), has had to withdraw all guarantees of funding as it faces legal action and possible bankruptcy stemming from residential school lawsuits.

The coalitions have regrouped under a working title of Canadian Churches for Justice and Peace, but a different name is being sought. A 14-member governing board, made up of representatives from the denominations that support the coalitions, has been appointed to oversee the restructuring. The board is charged with the difficult task of defining the priorities for the coalitions and making the necessary staff cuts.

Marjorie Ross, associate secretary for International Ministries, and Presbyterian World Service and Development director Rick Fee are the Presbyterian representatives on the board. Ross is also chairperson. "This has been a painful process," she says, "but our hope is this will lead to more effective ecumenical justice work."

House of Lords legalizes human embryo cloning

The British Parliament has voted to allow the cloning of human embryos, despite a united appeal by the country's religious leaders urging delay. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the two most senior Roman Catholic archbishops, an Orthodox archbishop, Protestant officials and leaders of the Muslim, Sikh and Jewish communities were among 11 religious leaders whose plea was disregarded. They had warned that the issue had not been fully addressed and that "one slight miscalculation" could lead to irreversible implications for future generations.

The move was approved on January 22 by a large majority in the upper chamber, the House of Lords, following its acceptance in December by the lower chamber, the House of Commons. It will allow the "therapeutic cloning" of embryos up to 14 days old. The technique involves creating genetically identical embryos from which will be taken stem cells for research into diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diabetes and cancer. It is similar to the technique used by the Roslin Institute in Scotland in 1997 to create Dolly, the sheep — the world's first cloned mammal.

Supporters of research on human embryos argue therapeutic cloning has nothing to do with reproductive cloning. But, in an open letter sent to members of the House of Lords on January 15, the faith leaders argued there was widespread agreement that the "huge philosophical and ethical implications" of such developments have not been fully considered. "Scientific opinion is also divided about the alleged benefits of therapeutic cloning — pointing to the morally uncontroversial use of stem cells from other sources." (*ENI*)

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Jubilee 2000 claims a victory as it wraps up operations

The United Kingdom has recently decided to stop using interest payments on debts owed to them by the world's poorest 41 countries. The Jubilee 2000 coalition hailed the decision as a "fantastic boost" to the movement to rid the developing worlds of unpayable debt.

The British government's announcement is immediately worth $30 million a year, according to Jubilee 2000. Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, made the announcement during a Jubilee 2000 event.

As excited as the Jubilee 2000 coalition was about the announcement, they admit that only about one-third of the $300 billion needed to make a lasting difference has been cancelled so far.

In the past four years of its existence, the Jubilee 2000 coalition has become a powerful international movement, being called "the most brilliantly successful campaign of our times." However, getting the hard cash necessary to wipe out the debt of the world's poorest countries has been harder. (*REC NE*)

news scan

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian ordains first woman pastor

Rev. Martha Mwale became the first woman to be ordained as a minister of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian on December 17.

Redeemer/Tyndale articulation agreement

The presidents of Redeemer University College and Tyndale College & Seminary have signed an articulation agreement that will make it possible for Tyndale students who have completed two years of study in selected majors to complete the final two years of their program at Redeemer. Justin D. Cooper of Redeemer and Brian C. Stiller of Tyndale met in a brief ceremony at Tyndale, concluding almost a year of discussions. The agreement, which will begin in the academic year 2001-2002, draws on Redeemer's authority under its provincial charter to conclude agreements with other institutions in offering its degrees.

And, maybe, a few nuts

Logia Inc.'s "Bible Bar" is being sold as a scriptural alternative to junk food. The all-natural whole food bar contains seven foods mentioned in Deuteronomy 8:8: wheat, barley, honey, figs, olive oil, grapes and pomegranates. Tom Ciola of Logia Inc. is working on a book titled *Moses Wasn't Fat*, which describes foods from the Old Testament. A statement on the company's Web site (www.logia.net) says its "mission from God" is to "help enable all of his children to maintain the health and purity of their bodies — his Holy Temple." (*The Church Herald*)

Better late than never

The congregation of Lake Dore Church, Lake Dore, Ontario, may have been a little late in "Doubling in the '80s," but it *did* double its membership nevertheless when 14 new members were received on September 17, 2000.

Beleaguered Russian atheists campaign against church

"Russia's beleaguered atheists have formed a new society to campaign against the growing power of the church in government and what they perceive as the 'threatening clericalization' of society," reports *The Observer of London*. "After 70 years of protection and promotion by the Soviet regime, atheism has become deeply unfashionable over the past decade amid a surge of enthusiasm for the Russian Orthodox faith." (Source: *Globe and Mail*)

Janna Plewes

Imagine ...

In the summer of 2000, the author spent two months working with people in poverty in Ethiopia through Hope International. What follows is a fictional but accurate account of a typical day in the life of an Ethiopian woman

Imagine you are on your way to work and the closest horse-taxi station is in the next village. You have already made it half-way to the station and have two miles to go. It is the rainy season, and the ground is still saturated from the heavy showers the night before. The mud swells around your bare feet and tries to suck you into the earth with each step.

Your head is covered and wrapped in a sheer, white cloth. You are wearing one of only two outfits you own: a plain blue cotton dress that has obvious holes worn through the fabric in revealing places and, underneath, brown stretch pants with the elastics on the bottom. You carry a cloth bag in your right hand and, every so often, shift the weight of it to the other hand.

The air is thick with smoke as it hangs in the mist. The sun will not rise for another hour. Darkness surrounds you but you are not afraid. The route through the maze of family dwellings is familiar, and you keep a brisk pace.

Finally, you reach the road. Pausing for a few seconds, you look as far down the road as you can. You imagine what it might be like over there, off in the distance ... After a few moments, you regretfully turn your back and walk in the opposite direction. Manoeuvring your way around pot-holes, you eventually meet up with another road where you make an abrupt right turn onto a narrow path that you know to be a shortcut.

Gradually, the path widens and you notice life beginning to stir all around you. The sun is still not up, but you can hear voices. Women are in various stages of preparing morning tea. Some are in the process of building fires, some are picking tea leaves, some are serving tea to their families and still others are cleaning up or making bread.



You suddenly realize it is market day — the reason so many villagers are already starting their day. Children are herding the family livestock either to sell or to load up with goods to be brought to or from the market. Older men and women are already getting a head start to avoid the rush, and the smell of spices dominates the senses.

You miss the silence of the early morning.

Oh! You can hardly believe your luck! You've just noticed some wheat that has spilled out onto the road from one of the bags on top of a lorry. You scramble beside two other women your age as you each try to get as much wheat as possible stuffed into your pockets. You manage five fistfuls of wheat, then pick yourself up with renewed energy. The day has started off well!

At the horse-taxi station, you are about to get into a buggy when the driver switches his attention to a couple of men. The driver knows he will get more money with a full load; so you wait until the next horse-taxi comes along, pay your 50 cents and prepare yourself for the bumpy ride. The horse kicks up mud as it runs along, but you are used to it. You enjoy the rush of air against your face.

Reaching the farm, you sign in and pick up this month's pay (25 dollars). Most of the other women are already changed, so you change quickly into the clothes you carried in the cloth bag. You grab a wide-brimmed hat from the shed and lay your muddied dress against a bush so it can dry. Then you run to join the other women in the field.

You don't know who, because you are concentrating on spacing the pepper plants correctly, but someone begins to sing. Unconsciously, you join in. Soon all

30 women are softly carrying the melody. The hours pass and only when the labour supervisors say it is break time does everyone stop singing and working.

Over the break, you wash your dress and take a drink from the pump. You try not to drink too much so that your body does not become accustomed to too much water. The dry season will come soon, and you want to be able to function regardless of how little water there will be.

The afternoon's work is harder. The pace is faster because it is market day — all the mature beets and onions need to be harvested. You make your way up and down the rows, pulling up plant after plant, cutting off what is good and what is bad, separating the good from the bad, loading the vegetables into boxes and, finally, hoisting them into a trailer.

The tractor takes you and the other women to the market where you all unload the goods. The supervisor finally lets you go at dusk and, remembering the wheat from the morning, you hasten to your mother's home.

Your youngest is so happy to see you that he runs on his little bare feet to greet you. You hoist him up, smile and kiss him first and then your mother. You exchange greetings, thank her and motion to the others to follow. The twins run together close behind and the eldest two whisper together about the unfolding of that night's soccer match in the village. You remind them to hurry because it is nearly dark.

At the house, you prepare dinner and make sure each child has a fair share of bread and tea. You also make fresh bread from the spilled wheat you found on the street. You plan to give the bread to your mother as a gesture of thanks to her for caring for your children. You regret you can't give more.

When the children are asleep, you blow out the fire and climb into bed with them. You are thankful another day is over and everyone is accounted for and fed. You can now sleep. R

Janna Plewes is studying at the University of Northern British Columbia and attends St. Giles Church in Prince George, B.C. She would like to work with the Canadian embassy in Ethiopia some day.

Childhood,

I thought to myself, is the source of many of the problems of homeless and alienated people. Calvin is a case in point. After several foster homes and as many schools, he graduated, barely literate, to the jails and prisons of his adult life. His habit of running away developed into a life on the street. Rebellious and angry, he needed no one's help. Now in his early 50s, he can't take it the way he used to. He would like to change, but his spirit is drained. He doesn't want to be the next lifeless shape found in a freezing park or doorway. He comes to us, now defiant, and now contrite, always desperate, hoping for a miracle.

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Tony Plomp

God's irresistible grace

question: *I grew up in another denomination. When I made the change to the Presbyterian Church, someone told me, "Presbyterians believe in predestination." Yet, after 25 years in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, I have yet to hear anyone preach on this subject or discuss it.*

And you are asking me to discuss this doctrine in less than one page!

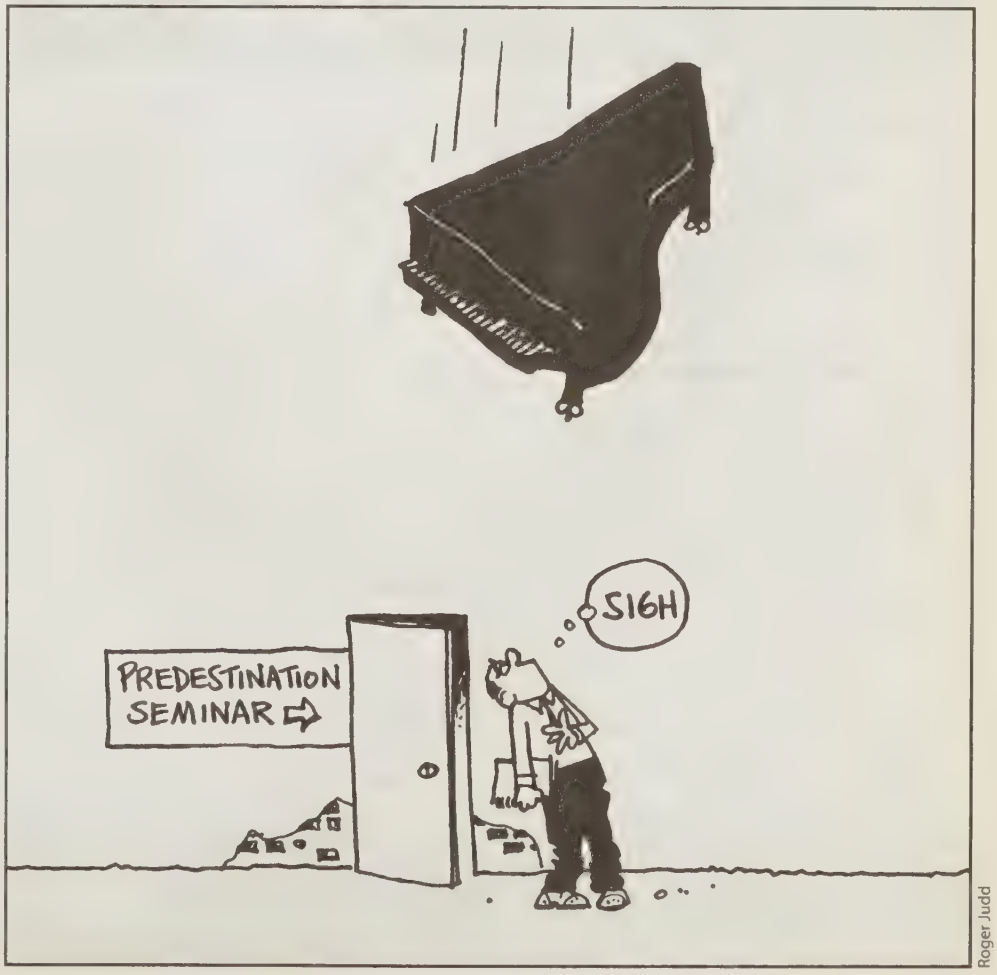
The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, one of the subordinate "standards" of our church, teaches: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death … their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished" (Chapter III). This is called the doctrine of "double predestination," and it is a dark doctrine, indeed. I don't know how many Presbyterians in Canada embrace it with any enthusiasm. With this doctrine, we presume to enter the very "mind of God," and I am loath to do so even though "proof texts" might be offered to claim this doctrinal formulation is based on the Word of God.

The passages frequently cited to buttress the doctrine of predestination are Ephesians 1:3-14 and Romans 8:29-30. But those Scripture passages "breathe an air of exultant joy; both exemplify what has been called 'truth that sings.' The chapter in the Confession, by contrast, breathes an air of dread and doom, and it ends with the advice to handle the subject with extreme caution" (*The Westminster Confession for Today* by George S. Hendry).

It is good advice to be careful with this doctrine. It is extremely difficult, easily misunderstood, and I cannot recall many fruitful discussions I have had with others about this subject. So it does not surprise me that silence has reigned over it during your sojourn with the Presbyterian Church.

Yet, I believe the doctrine is important. I will admit at the outset that it remains a mystery and I am happy to have it remain so, just as there are other parts of our faith we can only grasp "as through a glass darkly" (I Corinthians 13). Yet, the doctrine of predestination does enshrine the essential biblical truth that our eternal salvation is solely based on God's sovereign grace and not on our own righteousness. It is God's work, not ours (Romans 9:16). We are saved not because of who we are but because

BEYOND BELIEF



Roger Judd

What makes Tony dance?



"These elders are seeking permission to administer Communion in private homes! Off with their heads!"

(Cal Christie)

Editor's note: *We received 26 suggested captions for the photo "What makes Tony dance?" The one we liked best and, therefore, the winning submission was sent in by Cal Christie, an elder in Knox Church, Guelph, Ontario. Thanks to all who sent in submissions. You brightened our days and our mail.*

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of who God is. It is all of grace.

If this is the premise, that our salvation is God's work and not ours, and that even faith is God's gift to us, then human logic would dictate that those who are without faith are predestined to be excluded from the Kingdom by the fact of God withholding this gift. Such folk could do nothing to avoid being "fore-ordained to everlasting death." But there are times when human logic must give way to humility and a recognition that our thoughts are not God's thoughts. As novelist and preacher Frederick Buechner notes, "Theorizing about God this way is like an isosceles triangle trying to theorize the Great Pyramid of Cheops into the two dimensions of the printed page."

Nevertheless, I rejoice in the great affirmation that we are saved by grace through faith alone. Without this, there is no gospel, no good news. I affirm this truth whenever I sing "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound … " Remember the line, "'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved." This is the experience of the believer. Anyone who has come to Christ, particularly in later life, recognizes what Paul understood: that God's Spirit was at work in them, drawing them to faith in God and in Jesus Christ whom God has sent. They said "yes" to what they knew and felt to be God's irresistible grace.

When I think about my own life, I recognize it would not "qualify" me for heaven. My "goodness" is not good enough, my "righteousness" no better. We can never do enough to enter heaven. There is no way, as someone once said to me, we can swim to Hawaii! We can only be taken there. And God, in God's infinite love, graciously reaches out to us in Christ and takes us across the unbridgeable gap between Creator and creature. God places us with Christ, the Beloved of God, so that where he is, we may also be (John 14:3). This is the gift we accept by faith.

So I rest myself in the mystery of God's amazing grace, rejoice in it and give God the glory. R

Please send questions for Rev. Tony Plomp to tony_plomp@telus.net or 4020 Lancelot Dr., Richmond, B.C. V7C 4S3.


R. Sheldon MacKenzie

The light makes a difference

The light of the gospel requires that those who live by it share it with others

Dr. Ogg had been the minister of the old parish church of Anstruther (pronounced "Ainster"), in Scotland, for a lifetime. He had developed a hobby into something resembling an academic obsession. He had become an expert chronologist of the lives and ever-changing times of Jesus, the evangelists and the late Apostolic period.

On one bitterly cold evening, The Reverend Wilfred Hulbert, minister of Hope Park Parish Church in the university city of St. Andrews, took me with him to visit Dr. Ogg. Mr. Hulbert and he were old friends. We climbed a steep stone stairway to his study in the manse. He spoke of many things — of different periods in church history, the liturgy of the church, the present ministry in the Church of Scotland, and many other things of pressing interest to him and to Mr. Hulbert.

Presently, his housekeeper, a lady somewhere in her early 90s (apparently as old as Dr. Ogg), made her long, slow way into the manse tower where we three had spent the evening in relative comfort. She served tea and, then, went off to bed.

The time came for us to go back to St. Andrews. It had been a great evening.

On the way home, the car was as cold, or colder, than it was outside. It was perishingly cold. After a little distance, I enquired of Mr. Hulbert whether the car had a heater. He turned a switch, a red light came on and a fan began to blow. It looked promising for a warmer drive. But the temperature in the car remained unchanged.

"Are you warmer now?" Mr. Hulbert asked.

"No, quite frankly, I'm not!" I replied. "It seems the heater may not be working."

"Oh, there is no heat!" he said. "But the sight of the red light gives the impression of heat, doesn't it?"

Unlike the heater in Mr. Hulbert's car, there are all sorts of lights in our church, and in other churches as well, that provide what they are supposed to do. A warm meal after a long day on the streets, a bed in a church hall, and a benevolent fund that helps out in family or individual emergencies not only indicate heat but assure us it is turned on.

There is a disciple in Stellarton, Nova Scotia, an elder who visits the hospital on a daily basis. He brings with him the best of good cheer and a copy of the provincial daily paper. There is another man, an elder from a rural church, who visits the hospital every Sunday noon following worship in his local congregation. And the list goes on and on wherever the gospel has been taken seriously.

The light of the gospel requires that all who live by it on a personal level also share it with others less fortunate than themselves. At least, that is how I understand the words of Jesus: "Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." R

R. Sheldon MacKenzie, who lives in New Glasgow, N.S., is a retired professor from Memorial University in St. John's, and a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

2001 PROGRAMS at Crieff Hills Community

Retreat & Conference Centre
(Owned and operated by The Presbyterian Church in Canada)

A Day Apart —
$10 per person. Fourth Monday of each month *(Jan. to May, Sept. to Nov.)*
Facilitator:
Rev. Judee Archer Green, Chaplain
***March 26** – Annointed with love, **April 23** – Turn around, **May 28** – Gift of the Spirit, **Sept. 24** – Bread of Life, **Oct. 22** – For all the saints, **Nov. 26** – Advent: A season for preparation*

Church Secretaries Fellowship —
May 14-16, 2001 $150

Volunteer Weekends at Crieff —
May 18-21, 2001 (Friday eve to mid-day Monday) *Aug. 31-Sept. 3, 2001*
Become a Crieff Hills Associate ($20 per year, Students/Seniors $15 per year, Family $30 per year)
Crieff Hills Associate: Integrate & Nurture (C.H.A.I.N.) Become part of the link between CHC and the wider Church.

Women's Spring Retreat —
June 1-3, 2001 $150.00

Annual Crieff Yard Sale —
Sat. June 2nd 8:00 a.m to noon.

TLC (Teacher/Leader Course) —
September 29, 2001. Contact Brian Doyle or Dorothy Henderson at church offices: 416-441-1111, 1-800-619-7301

Sixth Annual Ministers Retreat —
October 2-4, 2001
(Co-sponsored by The Renewal Fellowship and Crieff Hills Community)

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Course # 2: The Circle Builders of the Ancient British Isles
Course # 3: Birding — North America's Fastest Growing Leisure Activity

Elderhostel # 2 — *Aug. 12-Aug. 17, 2001*
Course # 1: Settlement & Our Early Canadian Pioneers
Course # 2: Antiques and Authenticity
Course # 3: Walks on the Wild Side

Elderhostel # 3 — *Sept. 16-21, 2001*
Course # 1: Life in an Aboriginal Village in the 1400s
Course # 2 When I Consider the Heavens, the Moon and the Stars
Course # 3: Flora, Fauna and our Feathered Friends

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A SENIORS RECOGNITION SERVICE was held at St. John's Church, Cornwall, Ont., as part of the congregation's millennium celebrations last year. Honoured members and adherents were presented with certificates, burning bush pins and corsages. A special cake was served during the coffee time after the service.





TO HONOUR HIS 90 YEARS at St. Paul's Church, Amherst Island, Ont., Bruce Caughey was presented with a tribute from the congregation at a special service held at The Helen Henderson Residence where he resides. Bruce, who served as clerk of session for almost 40 years, has also been a leader in the community. Pictured with him are (L to R): Nellie Marshall (sister-in-law), Susan Caughey (daughter-in-law), Bruce Caughey (son), Helen Caughey (wife), Bonnie Caughey (daughter-in-law), Jeff Forester (grandson), Ruth Drumgoole (niece), Jack Forester (son-in-law) and Beth Forester (daughter).



FIONA FURZER, a member of St. Mark's Church, Don Mills, Ont., was presented with an Award of Excellence for Community Partnership from the City of Toronto in recognition of her efforts to integrate children with special needs into the public school system.



BETTY AND JACK GEDDES, missionaries to Taiwan, were special guests at Melita Church, Melita Man., last fall. Pictured with Betty (far left) and Jack are (L to R): elder Elsie Banks, Rev. Barb Alston and clerk of session Marian Greig.



BAPTISMAL GOWNS once worn by members of the congregation were on display during a recent coffee hour at Chedoke Church, Hamilton, Ont. Beside the gowns are display organizers Roy Williamson, Tom Phillips and Pam Evans.

Please note: Photos submitted for People & Places must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they are to be returned. Also, please try to ensure all pictures are clear and do not include a multitude of people. Colour or black-and-white photos are acceptable, but negatives and slides cannot be used. Thank you.

AIR-CONDITIONING AND a leather-bound pulpit Bible were given to Bristol Memorial Church, Bristol, Que., in memory of Maynard and Ena Russell by their family. Pictured (L to R) are: Rev. Robert Elford, Rev. Patricia Elford, Betty Russell Burton, Jack Porter, Nicholas Deeble, Dalton Russell, Ellen Russell Deeble and clerk of session Dalton Hodgins.





THE CONGREGATION OF St. Giles Church, Sarnia, Ont., paid tribute to one of its founding members, Evelyn (Scott) Simpson, during its 54th anniversary celebrations last year. Evelyn's faithful dedication to St. Giles began in 1945 when, as a teenager, she was one of 44 people who formed St. Andrew's Mission, which, in 1946, was dedicated as St. Giles Church. Over the years, she has served as an elder, Cub leader, church treasurer, building committee member, worship and music committee member, continuous member of the choir and active member of the women's group. She has also extended her talents to the community in a number of ways.

FIRST CHURCH, PICTOU, N.S., held a Scottish heritage service in September in connection with the town's celebration of the "Ship Hector Launch 2000." Pictured are three members of First Church who had a special interest in the launch of the replica. Janice Gammon (right) designed the "Ship Hector Tartan" to commemorate the original vessel and its passengers, who arrived in Pictou Harbour from Scotland in 1773. The tartan is registered in Scotland. Nancy English MacDonald (left) and her daughter, Aran, are direct descendants of a passenger on the original *Hector*.



CLIMBING TO NEW HEIGHTS at St. Andrew's Church, Duncan, B.C., are elder Jim Lofstrand (foreground) and Rev. Kerry McIntyre as they take part in a painting bee, along with about 30 other members of the congregation. The church was given a face-lift last year to bring it into the new millennium.



THE ELIZABETH LYLE AUXILIARY of the WMS of Central Church, Hamilton, Ont., presented a banner in recognition of the FLAMES initiative. The banner, shown here with its makers, Elizabeth Robertson (left) and Jean Crossan, is currently on display at the national church offices, awaiting a destination to an overseas partner of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.





A FEW SHOWERS did not dampen the proceedings when Haney Church, Maple Ridge, B.C., held a sod-turning ceremony for a new church hall and office facilities on Thanksgiving Sunday. Holding the shovel is Dorne Cornish, convener of the building committee.



REV. GLENN AND LINDA INGLIS, missionaries from Malawi, are pictured at Glenn's former home church, St. Andrew's, Maple Valley, Ont. They are joined by children from nearby Badjeros United Church who, along with their church school superintendent, Margo Aldcorn, and other adults, participated in a walk-a-thon that raised $1,800 for disabled children in Malawi.



THE 60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY of Cameron and Doreen Johnston was celebrated last year by the congregation of Bradner Church, Bradner, B.C.

THREE COUPLES FROM Jubilee Church, Stayner, Ont., — (L to R) Joan and John Wood, Doreen and Bob McDermid, Roy and Kay Wilson — celebrated their 50th wedding anniversaries last year. They were given surprise teas and presentations from the members of the choir.



VERA BARNES holds the plaque presented to her by the congregation of St. Andrew's Church, Kilmaurs, Ont., on the occasion of her retirement last year after 27 years of faithful service as organist.





AT A MILLENNIUM / 125th Anniversary of The Presbyterian Church in Canada event, the congregation of Knox Church, Fort Erie, Ont., honoured Gerry Hammett for her current musical work with the children of the church school by holding a junior choir reunion for those who sang with her in the '60s and '70s. The former choir members sang "Let there be peace on Earth," which they had first sung in 1966.



THE CONGREGATION OF Calvin Church, North Bay, Ont., celebrated its 75th anniversary last September. Special guests for the anniversary weekend were former minister Rev. Zander Dunn, his wife, Nancy, and their son, Kirk. Pictured with Zander and Nancy is clerk of session Binnie Armstrong (left), who presented them with a tapestry depicting various historical scenes of North Bay.



THE FRIENDSHIP GROUP OF St. Andrew's Church, North Battleford, Sask., celebrated its 30th anniversary with a special service last October. Over the years, the group has worked tirelessly on behalf of the church. Preparing to cut the anniversary cake are (L to R): Evelyn Brawn, the first president; Nina Backus, charter member; Linda Ard, current president; Caroline McEachern, long-standing member.



MARGARET (PEGGY) GRAHAM, who recently retired as clerk of session at St. Andrew's Church, Thunder Bay, Ont., is pictured with a water-colour painting of a local scene presented to her in recognition of her tireless service.



THE CONGREGATION OF St. Stephen's Church, Ottawa, unveiled a millennium tree last fall. The tree is located beside a new four-stage lift, part of a renovation project that included a new furnace, accessible washrooms, and a remodelled office and kitchen. Donors of $500 or more could have their names engraved on a leaf, or dedicate it to a special event, such as an anniversary, or in memory of a loved one. The roots of the tree include the names of the various church groups.


Ted Siverns

Parabolas, parables, prodigals & pouty people

"A parable is a small story with a large point"

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Jesus repeatedly spoke in metaphor (meaning "a crossing over"), an indirect form of communication that encourages and permits something new. His most frequent use of metaphor relates to the word "parabola," a curve like that thrown by a lampshade, for example. Parable is a kind of curve that seeks to bypass the human defence system, a defence system that attempts to keep God out. In breaching this defence, no one has ever told as many, as memorable or as effective parables as Jesus.

Parable is a form of communication that does not give information but breaches the defence of the listener. It allows the listener (more difficult with a reader!) to experience something so new and different that it would otherwise be rejected out of hand. Parable permits entry into a new and different world, a world called the "kingdom" or "reign" of God and, sometimes, the "aha" of the Spirit. Though parable calls for a "yes" decision, it permits rejection of that new world.

For P. G. Wodehouse, a parable is a Bible story that, at first, sounds like a pleasant yarn but keeps something up its sleeve that suddenly pops out and leaves you flat. Clarence Jordan wrote of Jesus' use of parables as a Trojan horse technique. Robert Funk observed: "What it says is minimal; what it intends is maximal." Frederick Buechner has well-said: "A parable is a small story with a large point." Elsewhere, I have formally defined parable as: a self-authenticating metaphoric story marked by brevity and focus, functioning in such a way that judgment is precipitated and reduction to the rational is resisted.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son has sometimes been called The Parable of the Forgiving Father. Either way, it occurs on the fourth Sunday of Lent in this year's cycle of lectionary readings. The parable comes to us with a problem — its familiarity. Its radical nature is smothered with words that are too well-known to our ears. Try listening to the parable in a variant form. Two examples follow.

There once was a couple who had two daughters. One of the daughters said no to university and insisted on the equivalent in cash so she could go to Europe "to find herself." She travelled widely and wildly, quickly spending her financial resources. Soon, she was penniless and pregnant, friendless and desperate. There was nothing she could do, she decided, but to beg, borrow or steal her way back to Richmond. Sick, sorry and afraid, she slowly turned onto the once-familiar street. Surprise! Every tree was decorated with yellow ribbons. A large banner read "Welcome Home Jane!" All the neighbours, relatives and friends were invited to a lavish party, for Jane had come home. And what did her sister do? She pouted profusely in a pious pique because she thought Jane should have been taken out behind the woodshed and taught a lesson. Her parents were too easy on Jane, she said. They were too soft. Where was justice in this situation? Jesus said that is what the Kingdom of God is like. But it's not fair.

Or the story about a woman who lived in Deep Falls on Blueberry Street with two small children and a husband who worked at the chocolate factory. One day, she insisted on "my half of the assets accrued in this boring marriage." It wasn't much but it was enough, she said. She moved to the big city to live "a free and independent life-style." Soon, she had to do everything she could simply to survive on the mean streets of the city. She had no real friends. With no money, she resorted desperately to prostitution to pay for a dumpy room and enough food to keep her alive. One day, cold, sick, lonely and afraid, she decided to return to her husband. He was awakened at four in the morning as he heard her car in the driveway. He rushed out to greet her and welcome her home — as his wife! But her parents never spoke to her again.

In real life, you know how the story usually ends. She rang the doorbell and her husband said: "Go away. Whatever you're selling we don't want to buy any" or "I no longer have a wife. Go away." What other endings are possible? R

For discussion and reflection

- Why did Jesus not simply use a question and answer format to speak about God? Why have the parables been called "weapons of confrontation"?
- With what character do you identify in The Parable of the Good Samaritan?
- Are the illustrations close to the original story? or how do they differ?
- How would you tell the story? Is God fair?
- What do I mean by "Some have heroes; we have prodigals"?

L. E. (Ted) Siverns is the minister of First Church in New Westminster, B.C.



Synod launches second volume of history
The Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario launched the second volume of its history during its annual meeting last October. It had been the dream of the late Rev. J. D. Marnoch to write a history of the synod. His book, *Western Witness* (1700-1885), was launched at the synod meeting in 1994. He was delighted when Rev. Peter Bush agreed to take on the second volume. The result is *Western Challenge* (1885-1925). Pictured at the book's launching are (from left) Rev. Bruce Miles, author Peter Bush and Rev. Charles Cook.

Western Challenge: The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Mission on the Prairies and North, 1885-1925
by Peter Bush (J. Gordon Shillingford, 2000, $24.95). Reviewed by Dale Woods.

Western Challenge is a fitting title for this book by Peter Bush. In the West and North, The Presbyterian Church in Canada faced amazing growth between 1885 and 1925. "Nearly one in four people living on the Prairies was a Presbyterian," the author states. Between 1901 and 1921, the Presbyterian Church on the Prairies grew by 450 per cent, almost matching the growth of the population. With this unprecedented growth came Herculean challenges of the land, mass immigration and urbanization.

The book is organized around these challenges. Various chapters deal with issues such as church expansion in the West and North, ministry to the Native population, outreach to non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants, the relationship between evangelism and social service, and Church Union. The story is told in a lively and engaging way. We meet dominant personalities of the Presbyterian Church such as James Robertson, but we are also introduced to many others whose commitment to Christ led them to make personal sacrifices far beyond what we may find today. We encounter successes and failures, creativity and bureaucracy, proclamation of the gospel to an emerging nation and surrender of the gospel to "the social mores of the dominant culture."

The author is aware the struggles and victories of these years are not merely history. They raise pertinent questions for our own times. Where does the vision for mission come from? Have we lost our sense of mission? How is it passed on to a new generation, or can it be passed on? Have we lost the sense of calling and turned ministry into a career? How does the church maintain its dual role of proclaiming the gospel in word and in deed? Have we lost our sense of evangelism? Does institutionalism hinder creativity and flexibility and, if it does, how do we ensure that these remain alive and well in the life of the church?

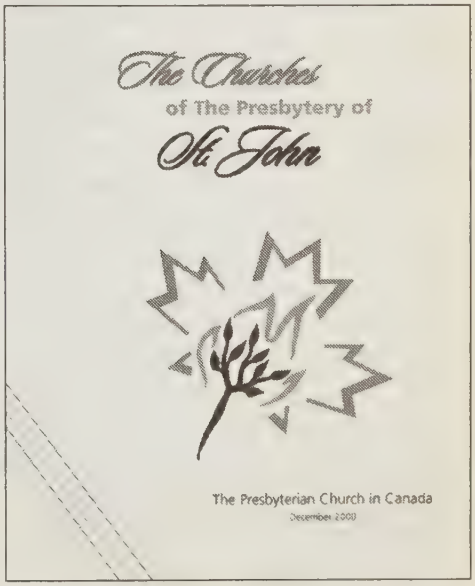
This book may not answer all our questions, but it can provoke us to reflect on our present reality and encourage us to learn from our own history. These stories not only inform us about our past in a particular part of the church, they encourage us to embrace and to renew our own commitment to Christ and to our neighbour. This book is worth reading.

Peter Bush is minister of Knox Church, Mitchell, Ontario, and a member of the Committee on History of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Dale Woods is minister of First Church, Brandon, Man.

The Churches of the Presbytery of St. John *edited by Joan Cho ($6.50 includes postage, from Robert Harris, 17 Bowes Ave., Sackville, N.B. E4L 3M9).*

This millennium project of the Presbytery of St. John includes a sketch of all 21 congregations that make up the presbytery plus Riverside Church, formerly in Prince William now a part of the historical display at Kings Landing. Each sketch includes a photo of the present church building. Readers will be immediately struck by vast differences in architecture from the historic Greenock Presbyterian Church in St. Andrews to the supermodern architecture of St. Columba in Saint John. Anyone who has lived or worked in this area or has an interest in Presbyterian history will want to secure a copy of this well-prepared volume.



Millennium quilt exhibit

March 9-26
Ormstown Church, Ormstown, Quebec

classifieds

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First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ontario: A History to Commemorate the New Millennium *(Friesens, 2000, $40). Available from First Church, 60 Fifth St., Chatham, Ont. N7M 4V7; (519) 352-2313; frstprsb@ciaccess.com. Reviewed by John Congram.*

This wonderful hardback book of the history of First Church has more than 200 glossy pages of text, photos and illustrations going back to its beginnings. There are many full-colour photos and interesting black-and-white pictures. They not only include clergy and elders who served the congregation but also the ball teams, old cars and picnics.

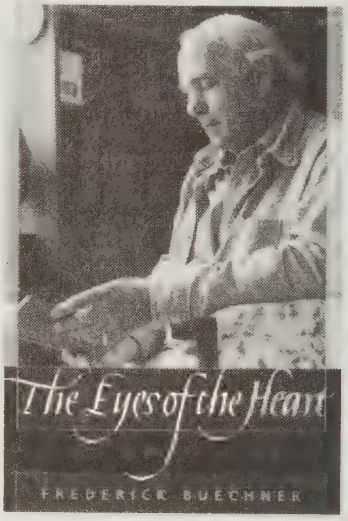
First Church has provided many leaders for our church, including many of its ministers. In 1960, three of its sons were ordained in one service: John Balsdon, Ron Balsdon and Alan Ross.

Many will not know that evangelist Leighton Ford (brother-in-law of Billy Graham) was nurtured in First Church. In a moving preface to the volume, Ford reminisces about growing up in Chatham and First Church and talks about the influence the people in First Church had on his life. It is almost worth the price of the volume on its own. This is one of the finest church histories I have had the pleasure of reading. Even if you have had no connection with First Church, you will enjoy this volume.

The Eyes of the Heart: A memoir of the lost and found *by Frederick Buechner (Harper, 1999, $27.50). Reviewed by John Congram.*

Frederick Buechner has already produced a three-volume autobiography. Perhaps, following his own dictum that all true theology at its heart is autobiographical, he has produced this fourth volume. But, of course, it is more than a memoir. It is Buechner reflecting on life and the possibility of life after death. He is now past 70 and wonders what the future holds for him. As he looks around his Magic Kingdom at the treasures he has amassed over those years, he wonders, as we all have, what will become of them. Will they be unloaded in the nearest Dumpster or will someone treasure them as he has and allow them to evoke memories as they do for him.

Buechner's Magic Kingdom is his library/study that contains the books, photographs and artifacts he has collected over a lifetime. He allows them to guide us through his life story or, at least, significant parts of it. At the beginning, he introduces us to his grandmother on his



mother's side, Naya, who died in 1961. Throughout the memoir, he carries on a dialogue with Naya about the events they shared together.

As in his other volumes, the death of his father by suicide when Buechner was a young boy always lingers near the surface of all his stories. He longed to know his father better. As he was completing the last few pages of this book, his youngest brother and only sibling dies. The last few chapters centre on Jamie's death and their life together.

You will enjoy this deeply moving, yet stringently honest story of one person's journey. *The Eyes of the Heart* "stands as a touching testimonial to the significance of kinship to the author as well as to the legions of readers who have come to regard him as one of their own."

Frederick Buechner is a Presbyterian minister and author of more than 30 books.

Most books reviewed may be purchased through The Book Room, 50 Wynford Dr., North York, Ont. M3C 1J7. Prices include shipping and handling but not GST. Do not send payment with order. An invoice will follow. Please include name and location of congregation. Toll-free order line: 1-800-619-7301, ext. 301, e-mail: bookroom@presbyterian.ca.

DEATHS

OLD, REV. ALLAN MacARTHUR, on January 7, 2001, in Edinburgh, Scotland, at 87 years of age. Survived by wife Isobel, and Fiona and Colin. Formerly of the following Presbyterian churches in Canada: St. Andrew's, St. John's, Nfld.; Thorburn and Sutherland's River, N.S.; Norman Kennedy, Regina, Sask. Also of Grangemouth and Uddingston in Scotland. Dedicated to the healing ministry and animal causes. He was a faithful servant.

BOYD, PENELOPE, 92, active elder, WMS honorary life member, active in all areas of congregational life, Bonar-Parkdale, Toronto, Nov. 17, 2000.

COPLAND, JOHN C., active elder, friend, St. Andrew's, Windsor, Ont., Oct. 28, 2000; survived by wife Helen, children Gloria and Robert, and two grandchildren.

DUNCAN, IAN, former elder, treasurer and longtime member of St. John's Church, White Rock, B.C., on Jan. 11, 2001, age 87 years.

FRY, NORMAN GILCHRIST, on Dec. 9, 2000, longtime member and elder at Knox-Calvin Presbyterian Church, Harriston, Ont. He served faithfully as clerk of session for 12 years. Lovingly remembered by his family and friends.

INNES, DR. FRANK, elder, educator, St. Andrew's, Windsor, Ont., Dec. 2, 2000; leaves behind wife Willa, daughters Dawn and Joy, son Jonathan and their spouses, four grandchildren.

PARSONS, PETER WALTER JESSE, elder, St. Paul's, Ingersoll, Ont., Nov. 1, 2000. Choir member, lay preacher, building committee chairperson. Charter member, South Gate, Hamilton, Ont. Devoted elder, loving father and faithful servant of his Lord.

STUART, JOHN J., elder, trustee, St. Andrew's, Windsor, Ont.; predeceased by wife Jessie; leaves daughter Heather, sons John and Ian and their spouses, six grandchildren, five great-grandchildren.

THOMSON, ALVIN "BILL," 90 years, faithful member of Knox Presbyterian Church, Sudbury, Ont., died Dec. 24, 2000.

WALKER, JOHN, in his 90th year, a faithful member and elder of St. John's (Toronto), Leaside (Toronto) and First (Penetanguishene) Presbyterian churches, on Jan. 15, 2001.

WATSON, ETHEL, longtime member (70 years) of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Hillsdale, Ont. Devoted time and life to the church. Loved by all.

WEIR, VERA VIOLA (BROWN), age 94, died Sept. 22, 2000. Vera was a longtime member of Drummond Hill Church, Niagara Falls, where she and her late husband, elder James Alexander Weir, gave gentle and encouraging leadership and nurture to their church family. Vera was active in Sunday school and Ladies Aid. A well-attended service to celebrate her life was held at Drummond Hill on Sept. 25, 2000, led by her minister, Rev. Dr. Hugh Jones. Vera is survived by her children, Nancy Burns, Lynn Coach and Richard Weir; by the generations of her large extended family; and by her brothers and sisters in the faith.

INDUCTIONS and RECOGNITIONS

McDonald, Rev. Ian (associate minister), First Church, Chatham, Ont., Dec. 3.

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Hanwell, N.B., St. James. Rev. Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1M2; 506-455-8220; sapc@nbnet.nb.ca.

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Miramichi, N.B., St. James. Rev. Philip Crowell, 206 Wellington St., Miramichi, N.B. E1N 1M7.

Montague, P.E.I., St. Andrew's; Cardigan, St. Andrew's. Rev. Roger MacPhee, Belfast Post Office, Belfast, P.E.I. C0A 1A0.

New Glasgow, N.S., St. Andrew's. Rev. Iona MacLean, Box 1003, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0; ionamac@auracom.com; 902-485-4298.

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Saint John, N.B., St. Columba. Rev. Ted Thompson, 101 Coburg St., Saint John, N.B. E2L 3B7; 506-634-7765.

Scotsburn, N.S., Bethel; Earltown, Knox; West Branch, Burns Memorial. Rev. Jeanette Fleischer, Box 142, River John, N.S. B0K 1N0; 902-351-2777; jen.fleisch@ns.sympatico.ca.

Springhill, N.S., St. David's; Oxford, St. James; Riverview, St. Andrew's. Rev. Kevin Steeper, RR 2, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0; 902-485-8944; thesteepers@auracom.com.

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Kemptville, Ont., St. Paul's; Oxford Mills, St. Andrew's. Rev. Dr. William Klempa, 155 Ch. Lac Louisa N, Wentworth, Que. J8H 3W8; 450-533-5321; wklemp@po-box.mcgill.ca.

Montreal, Robert Campbell Taiwanese (half-time English/Taiwanese bilingual assistant). Rev. Harry Kuntz, 92 Rockwyn Ave., Pointe Claire, Que. H9R 1W2.

Mount Royal, a suburb of Montreal (part time). Rev. Peter Szabo, 7110 de l'Epee, Montreal, Que. H3N 2E1.

Nepean, Ont., Parkwood (effective July 1, 2001). Rev. J.H.W. Statham, 1220 Old Tenth Line Rd., Orleans, Ont. K1E 3W7.

Ottawa, Westminster. Rev. Alex Mitchell, 2400 Alta Vista Dr., Ottawa, Ont. K1H 7N1.

Pierrefonds, Que., Westminster (part time). Mr. Elias Saikaly, 4373 Elgin, Pierrefonds, Que. H9H 1T9; e_saikaly@hotmail.com.

Smiths Falls, Ont., Westminster. Rev. Milton A. Fraser, 80 Daniel St. N, Arnprior, Ont. K7S 2K8; 613-623-5531; standrew@storm.ca.

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Erin, Burns; Ospringe, Knox. Rev. Gerald Rennie, 67 Churchill Rd. N, Acton, Ont. L7J 2H9; gerald.rennie@sympatico.ca.

Etobicoke, Mimico. Rev. Susanne Rescorl, 680 Annette St., Toronto, Ont. M6S 2C8; 416-767-2689; fax 416-767-1229.

Fergus, St. Andrew's. Rev. Linda Bell, 2 Cross St., Elmira, Ont. N3B 2S4; drbell@execulink.com.

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Maple, St. Andrew's. Rev. Bryn MacPhail, Box 164, 19 Stewart St., Beeton, Ont. L0G 1A0;

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Oshawa, Knox. Rev. Lois Whitwell, The Search Committee, 147 Simcoe St. N, Oshawa, Ont. L1J 4S6; gorddi@durham.net.

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Windsor, Minister to begin a new outreach project near the University of Windsor. Rev. Hugh Appèl, Convener, Knox Presbyterian Church, 251 Duncan at Wellington, Wallaceburg, Ont. N8A 5G5; knox@kent.net.

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called to wonder

Written by Erin Walton,
youth minister, First Church, Edmonton

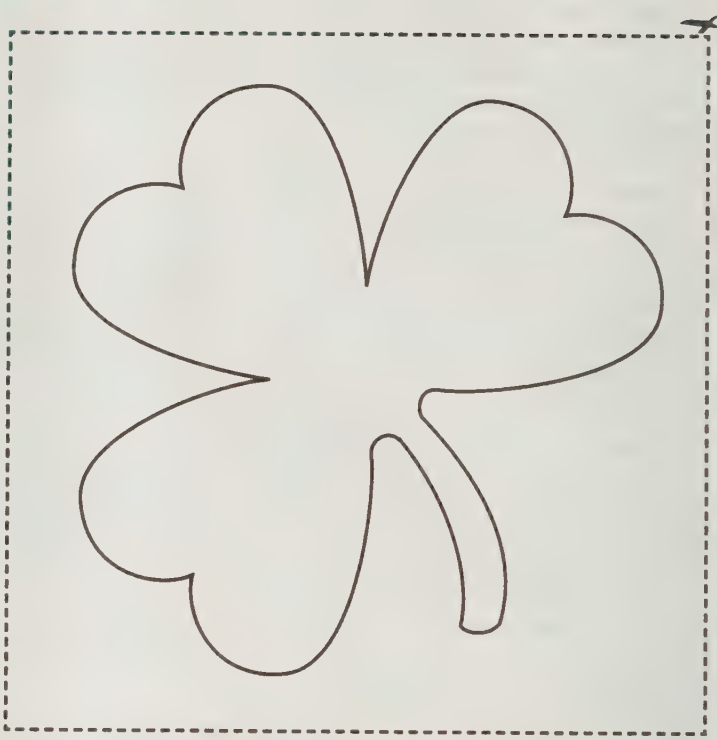
Do you know what Irish holiday is celebrated in March?

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated on March 17th to honour Patrick, Ireland's patron saint. When Patrick was 16, he became a shepherd and spent six years of his life herding sheep. Can you name any shepherds from the Bible?

The Shamrock

The shamrock (or clover) is used as a symbol of St. Patrick's Day. Some say Patrick used the shamrock to explain his faith to people. One leaf for the Father, one for the Son and one for the Holy Spirit.

Some people say, if they find a four-leaf clover, it is good luck and they make a wish. If you found a four-leaf clover, what would you wish for? Maybe you would wish for help at school, or help forgiving your little sister, or you might wish for better health for someone who is ill. Prayer is a great way to ask for something you've been wishing for. God is always listening.



Read John 15:5-8

I would like to pray for ...

AMEN

Make a prayer booklet

1. Cut out several small squares of paper.
2. Colour the picture above (use your favourite shade of green).
3. Glue the picture onto one of the squares of paper.
4. Print "My Prayer Booklet" above the picture.
5. Ask an adult to staple the paper squares together in the top left corner (with the picture as the first page).
6. Whenever you wish for something to happen, write it in your prayer booklet, then share it with God.

Link to more about **St. Patrick's Day** online at:
www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html

Headlamp out



I turned the car ignition switch the other morning and my HEADLAMP OUT dialogue box came on.

I should give you a little background before I go further. I love my car. I really do. It's a marvel of electronic wizardry. My on-board computer does almost everything. I never run out of windshield-washer fluid because it flashes a message when it's running low.

But I hate my car, too. It's a strange relationship — I have a genuine, emotional bond with two tonnes of steel and glass. And I hate the way it makes me absolutely crazy when something goes wrong. You know what I mean. That hollow, cold spot between your ribs when you notice a funny noise. Those sweaty palms when the brakes don't respond exactly as they did when you drove off the dealer's lot a few years back.

I'm torn. I want to yell: "Get a grip! You're a grown woman! It's only a machine!" And I want to sob, "My baby's sick!" Pitiful, isn't it?

Anyhow, my HEADLAMP OUT message comes up. OK … relax. In through the nose; out through the mouth. You can do this. (I think I can, I think I can …)

I'm under control. I don't need to self-medicate (this time). I plunked down my $13.99 at the Canadian Tire later that day and bought a new bulb. And installed it.

I'm proud to tell you it's *my* car. Not my husband's. My savings bond covered the down payment. My credit got the loan and my income paid it off. I monitor *all* my own fluid levels, keep track of my own routine maintenance, vary my additives with the season — I even know how to gap my plugs and what a cold-cranking amp is.

But I cannot replace a halogen bulb without being reduced to a quivering, spineless, quaking puddle. I hasten to defend myself by saying I am a doer. I do not ask for help without exhausting my own resources first. I do not throw my hands in the air and leave the job for someone else without pouring over the instructions first. In short, I am a manual reader. I read. I watch. I learn. I do. But I cannot replace a halogen headlight bulb.

I read the owner's manual and the instructions on the package. But the first time one of these babies burned out, I found out I had to apply the same amount of pressure on the socket housing to remove the bulb that I'd use to crack a walnut.

No way. Uh-uh. I'll buff and I'll cajole and I'll pour a few drops of high-grade 5W30 oil down its dainty gullet — but I cannot, *will not*, use that kind of force. Not with *my* baby!

So my husband changes the bulb. I hover, manual in hand, reading out step-by-step instructions. Frantically, I try to convince him to let the nice Canadian Tire technician install the bulb. What's $35? It'll break! The housing will break! Something *catastrophic* will happen and the repair bill will be huge, and the mechanics will laugh, and …

Before my head explodes, I sit in the car, pull out a magazine and read until my husband finishes. The two of us get the job done. I have small fingers that fit into the tight spot. He has the nerve and strength to pop the bulbs in and out. I have the dexterity to click the whole thing into position.

I often think that's how it is with God and me. There are times when I am overwhelmed. When I do not know enough. When I am not capable enough. When I am not brave enough. God's strength takes over where mine fails. He has answers when I cannot even see questions. When my understanding falls short and I stubbornly cling to my pride and my vanity and my self-serving nature, God takes me by the hand. And, together, we make it right.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10, *NIV*).

Next spring, we're selling our condo and buying a house. The real estate agent said we'd need to do something about the hard water at the new place. Yet another inanimate object in my life that will require understanding and upkeep. And I know I will become emotionally attached to it. Oh, Lord, give me strength. R

Sandy Campbell is a free-lance writer living in Whitby, Ont. This article first appeared in *Sally Ann*, a magazine published by the Salvation Army.

"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." ***2 Corinthians 9:7***



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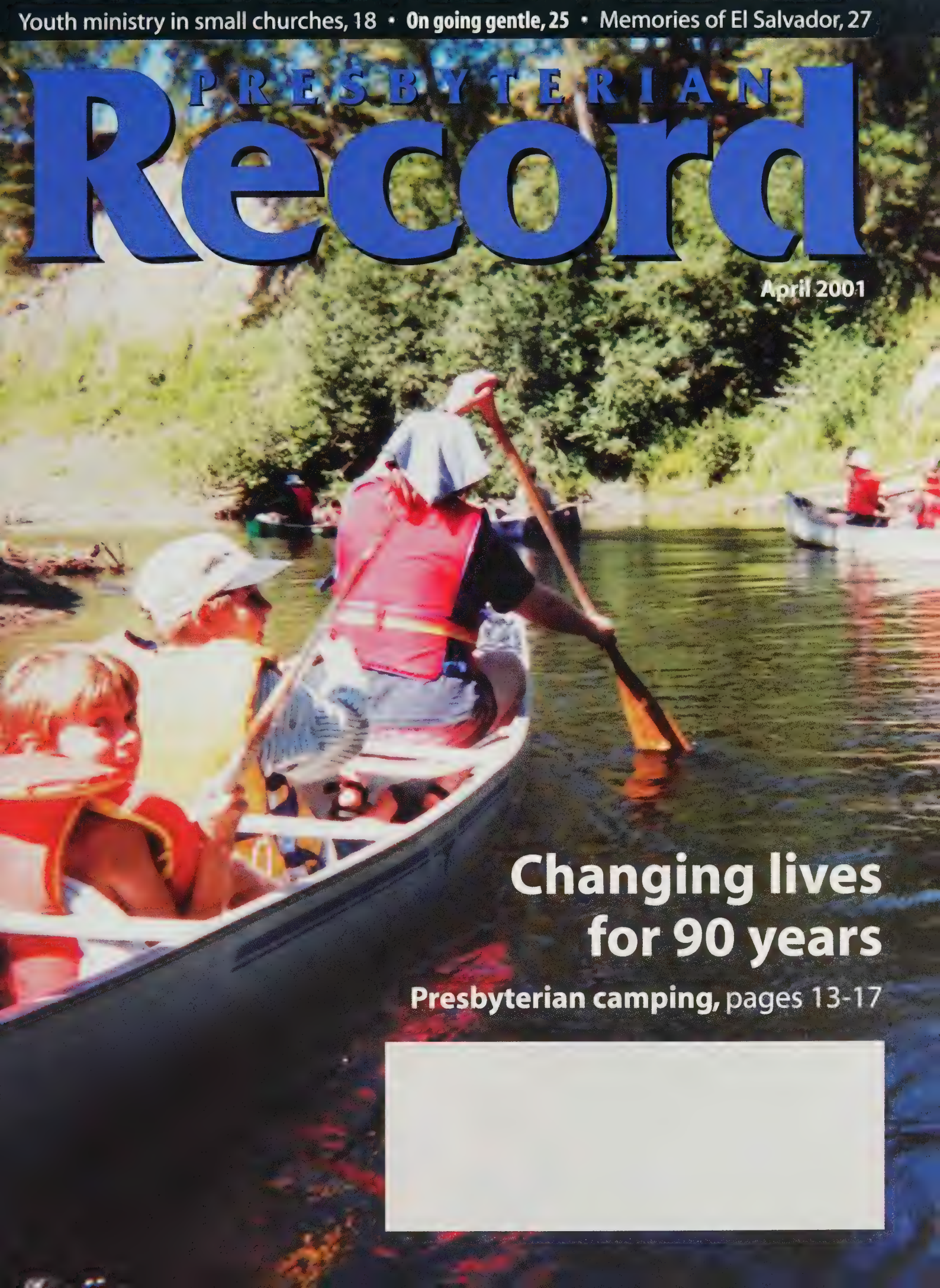
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PRESBYTERIAN
Record

April 2001



Changing lives for 90 years

Presbyterian camping, pages 13-17

Grace

God comes to us before we go to him. John Timmer used to say that this is God's habit. God came to Abraham when there was nothing to come to, just an old man at a dead end. But that's God for you. That's the way God likes to work. He comes to old men and to infants, to sinners and to losers. That's grace, and a sermon without it is no sermon at all.

— James Van Tholen in *Surprised by Death*

Children who listen

When children listen to us, to our sermons, to our lessons and even to our counselling, it is because we have earned their trust and their feeling that we care.

— Parker Rossman



Children's ministries are not a fun side dish on the pastoral menu; children need earnest ministry to help them cope with their bewilderment, fear, pain and loneliness.

— L. Philip Dann

Buy without money

"Hey there! All who are thirsty,
come to the water!
Are you penniless?
Come anyway — buy and eat!
Come, buy your drinks, buy wine and milk.
Buy without money — everything's free!
Why do you spend your money on junk food,
your hard-earned cash on cotton candy?
Listen to me, listen well: Eat only the best,
fill yourself with only the finest."

— from Isaiah 55, Eugene Peterson's *The Old Testament Prophets in Contemporary Language*

Silence

The other night at presbytery, as I listened to a minister drone on, there came to mind the old Quaker saying, "Don't speak unless you can improve on the silence." Churchill said something similar about a speaker he had endured: "He missed a fine opportunity for keeping quiet."

— James A. Simpson

Disciplining our own

I once thought that our inability to discipline our own was due to mushy Methodist ideas of "grace." In the church, discipline and law are means of grace, not its antithesis. But I have now come to believe that the cause of this inability is even more serious. We have so little respect for our own calling, so little sense of awe for the sanctity of our ordination, that we are unable to muster much righteous indignation for those who violate our vocation. What we ought to say is not, "Jesus forgives you and therefore we forgive you — after you have had a year of church-sponsored counselling." We ought to say, "We have so much respect for our vocation that to allow you to continue in it would demean the sacrifices we have made to be ministers — to say nothing of the sacrifice of Jesus."

— From *Calling and Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life* by William H. Willimon

Billy Graham on faith in God

I once asked Billy Graham what his goal was when he took the pulpit. He replied: "First of all, I want the content to be accurate. I want it to be biblical, and I want it to be simple. I study to be simple."

I pressed him. "Can't a message be too simple?"

"When Dr. Karl Barth, the great Swiss theologian, the greatest theologian of his generation, was visiting America a couple years ago, he was at one of our great seminaries, and a student asked him the question, 'Dr. Barth, what is the greatest, single thought that ever crossed your mind?'

"And he bowed his head, and puffed on his pipe, and he slowly lifted his shaggy head, and they thought some tremendous statement was coming forth, and they were all on the edge of their seats, and he said, 'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.'"

— Excerpt from *Billy Graham: Personal Thoughts of a Public Man*, 30 years of conversations with David Frost, Chariot Victor Publishing

Contaminated water



Each day around the world, approximately 30,000 persons die as the result of drinking contaminated water. Experts also estimate contaminated water causes 75 per cent of the diseases infecting humans.

— Marj Carpenter in *The Presbyterian Outlook*


John Congram

Surprise!

Surprise!

Presbyterians don't like surprises; they need to welcome them and learn from them

I've been lucky. For more than 20 years, I've lived in Toronto and never had my car rear-ended — at least, until the other day. Twenty years must be some kind of record for Toronto. My son had two experiences the first year he owned a car. I was relaxed, waiting to make a left turn when it suddenly happened. Clunk. I shot forward. Outside of a sore, stiff neck, no damage resulted. But it did come as a surprise. It reminded me of what theologian Paul Scherer once said about life: "Life is forever sticking its head around a corner when we aren't looking and crying out 'Surprise! Surprise!' And it isn't always a pleasant surprise." We all resonate with that.

But it also reminded me of what Malcolm Gladwell said to me during an interview. Communicators of ideas must constantly experiment, he said, then evaluate what they have done and be prepared for surprises. Presbyterians generally don't like or want surprises. But we need to expect, dare I say enjoy, surprises and learn from them.

The other day, someone sent me a copy of an item by the founder of the Sojourners organization, Jim Wallis. Sojourners is a group of evangelical Christians in Washington, D.C., who are deeply involved in social justice and action.

Wallis expressed surprise at receiving a call from the then President-elect Bush asking to meet "with religious leaders about faith-based initiatives in solving the nation's problems." He was further surprised a few days later by Bush's willingness to spend more than an hour listening and asking questions. After the meeting, Wallis said to Bush, "I hope you surprise us."

Bush responded, "I better if I hope to get re-elected."

Wallis wasn't the only one surprised at the meeting that brought together not only Christians but Jews and Muslims as well. Ron Sider, president of the Philadelphia-based Evangelicals for Social Action and a registered Democrat, said he was convinced Bush really wanted to help the poor. An expanded role for faith-based organizations in partnership with the government in overcoming poverty will be something worth monitoring during Bush's term of office. Although, admittedly, this kind of partnership is not as unusual in Canada as it is in the United States. Sider reported Bush said he thought the government could help with the poverty of the wallet, but "Government can't heal hearts."

We all tend to put each other into airtight boxes that allow for no surprises. I think it is fair to say most mainline church leaders did not support George Bush. To most of us, he was simply another right-wing, white Republican. But many of those we have put into boxes are dying to get out and surprise us if we allow them to do it.

I am convinced that one essential ingredient for effective ministry in the third millennium will be the ability and willingness to embrace and use the surprises God sends

Think about it as we enter the liturgical season that might be dubbed the season of the big surprise. Easter came as a radical surprise. The disciples could not fathom it. It had never happened before, perhaps foreshadowing the oft-quoted phrase, "We never did it this way before." Even though the disciples had spent three years with a surprising man who said and did surprising things, Easter came as one surprise that was too much for them.

I am convinced that one essential ingredient for effective ministry in the third millennium will be the ability and willingness to embrace and use the surprises God sends. One cannot predict who or what ideas God will resurrect to lead us into new forms of mission and ministry.

John Congram



photo by Jean-Frédéric Beauchesne

It may not seem like much, but this 20' x 15' rectangle of murky water is hope for these women in southern Malawi. This fish-pond — built with weeks of hard labour — is filled with fishlings purchased with a loan from PWS&D's partner, the Naming'azi Farm. The women will use the proceeds from the fish to pay back the loan. Once the loan is paid back, another community can begin its own pond.

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Canoeing at Gracefield Camp, Gracefield, Quebec.

The high cost of free health care

I read with close interest Professor Boan's thought-provoking article (February *Record*). I readily defer to his 40 years experience with the Canadian health care system. While it is admittedly presumptuous for a layperson to venture observations on this topic, here are some thoughts that occurred to me.

I am not convinced that "privatization is, by far, the most serious threat to our health care system." What is our system? Whatever it is, users have broadcast thousands of complaints about it. Obviously, there are defects and, in my opinion, these will not be corrected by merely throwing money at the medical authorities. A little competition between government-funded and private care systems might be a good thing.

I would like to see more emphasis on keeping people well. In my opinion, about 70 per cent of ailments cure themselves and, perhaps, 10 per cent are incurable in the present state of the art. The medical profession does marvellous work in emergency situations and with operations that improve quality of life (e.g., heart surgery, hip replacements, treatment of eye cataracts). Seniors like myself clutter up the medical care system with inevitable debilities of advancing years.

The medical profession should be less protective of its turf, particularly regarding routine ailments. In my navy days of the Second World War, it was not feasible to have a medical officer on every ship or shore station. Gaps were filled by trained sick bay attendants who were able to handle most of the ailments and injuries they encountered. Serious cases would be transferred as soon as possible to well-equipped medical facilities.

Shorter letters are more likely to be published and less likely to be edited

In many cases, what is required is sympathetic attention and common sense advice. An experienced, friendly, concerned nurse can often do this better than a harassed graduate of medical school. I wonder how many medical appointments feature such advice as stop smoking, eat less, exercise, take these pills and call me in two months.

Russ Merifield,
Toronto

I have real difficulty with some of the assumptions in John Boan's article on Canadian health care. How can Canada's health care system be called "the greatest test of participatory democracy" when Canadians were simply told by government that private health care would no longer be allowed.

What is admirable about a system that prohibits private health care in Canada and then sends patients to private health care facilities outside the country at the cost of the taxpayer? Why is our government supporting another private health care system when it won't allow private health care in Canada?

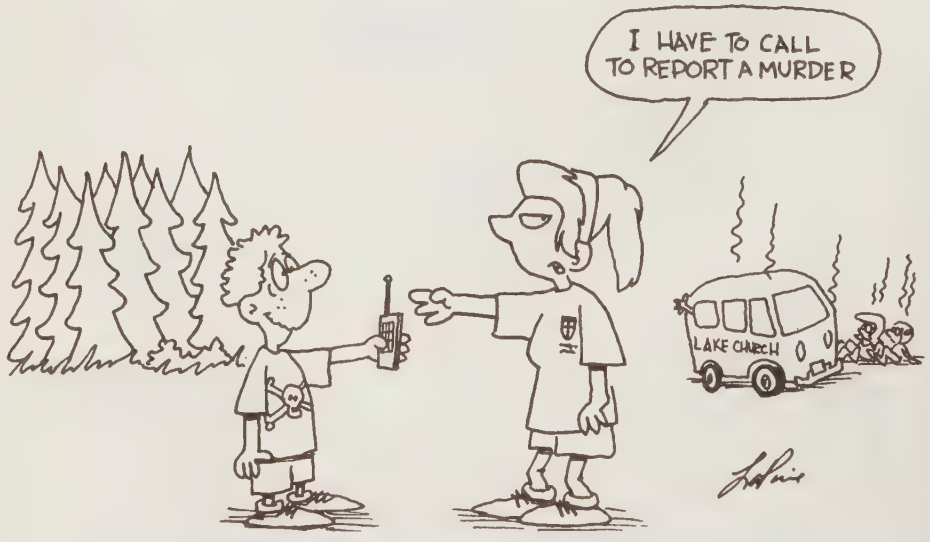
Obviously, private health care *does* help to free up the system or the government wouldn't be doing this. Why not spend the revenue *in* Canada? What a concept!

The most serious threat to Canadian health care is not the possibility of private medicine. The most serious threat to a troubled health care system is the refusal to consider all options.

D. Nesbitt,
Toronto

Professor Boan's article argues the main points of socialized health care that have been advocated from the beginning: universal health coverage for all. Most Canadians agree this is not a perfect system but a preferable system. Yet, some are questioning its efficiency and cost-effectiveness. But one important issue is missing.

My question for Professor Boan is this: "Is this a Christian health care system?" In an increasingly secular and pluralistic society, "healing" or the implementation of health care has become almost totally divorced from Christian



Two hours after the church van breakdown,
after youth pastor Jim walked five miles to the next town,
after three kids fainted from being overheated,
after several had to go to the bathroom in poison ivy-infested woods,
junior higher Rusty Baginski finally volunteers
the use of his cellular phone to youth sponsor Diane.

"morality" (ethics) and, most important, from Christian "faith."

As a health care worker in an urban hospital in the Toronto area, I am paid by taxpayers to serve my patients. To me, however, the greatest tragedy and cause of concern is not the cost of health care but the almost total absence of any legitimate Christian ministry or outreach to sick and dying people. In fact, the "healing" environment is so often hostile to Christian "faith" that the few believing medical staff or members of the health care team are not able to comfort, encourage or witness to people in need with words of faith. Yes, people have universal health care coverage, but there is scant real healing. The saddest part of my job is watching people die without God. Our health care system, with all its high technology, is in more need of an active mission witness than most far-flung overseas outposts.

Robert J. Prebble,
Hamilton, Ont.

Health care and the need for epidemics of ideas

Both subjects were well-presented in the February *Record*; they seem to go together. Our health care system desperately needs changes and relief, but how? Two-tier, private services are a temporary expedient at best and an insidious step in the wrong direction at worst. There are better ideas, but the present federal government is not listening.



Only the provinces and the doctors know the realities firsthand, and are duty-bound to listen to every good idea, every avenue of relief. But no single province can amend the Canada Health Act (CHA), a major source of the logjam in our health services. Sadly, it may take years for a quorum of provinces to agree on the CHA amendments needed and, then, to pressure the federal government successfully to adopt the amendments.

Here's one idea that should be on the table. In a letter a year ago to Allan Rock, the federal minister of health, I suggested provinces should be free to legislate modest cost-sharing to certain groups that overtax the health system; for example, smokers, very overweight persons who could control their health better and, perhaps, folks "who ski out of bounds." The tax dollar saved could be used in various ways, including training and retraining more health professionals.

The eventual answer was bureaucratic and could have been interpreted as "We're busy now on anti-smoking propaganda, and we wouldn't want to be seen tinkering with the Canada Health Act before an election."

We all can hope that ideas from the grassroots will germinate and spread, especially to provincial ministries and premiers. John Boan's article and similar analyses warrant frequent rereading and response.

Glenn Cooper,
Parksville, B.C.

That illustration!

The article in the February *Record* on the high cost of "free" health care is a good review, and Professor Boan is to be commended. However, the illustration on the cover has fallen into the "snakes" error. It depicts a Canadianized version (maple leaf added) of Mercury's logo — remember the Bank of Commerce logo and Mercury cars previous logo. Now Mercury was the god of commerce, and the messenger of the gods, with his winged helmet and sandals. Aesculapius was the god of healing, and his "logo" had a single serpent. So, one snake makes a big difference — think of Eve. Yes, I know the Americans use Mercury's symbol, but this is incorrect.

So a good article, but please choose your illustrations carefully.

R. J. McBurney, MD,
Orangeville, Ont.

I was taken aback by the cover of the February *Record*. It showed several white, middle-class males struggling with another white, middle-class male to

Evangel Hall
Summer 2001 Job Opening

Youth Program Consultant

Evangel Hall wishes to hire a qualified university student for summer 2001 to do a research study on the needs of inner-city youth for a Christian-based youth program at the Hall.

The goal of the study will be to recommend programs that (a) meet the highest priority needs of high school-age youth in the Hall's area and (b) fit with our mission to "enable the distressed of Toronto's inner city to achieve their potential through a Christian ministry of service, programs and advocacy designed to nurture self-esteem and human dignity."

In the study, you will:
- identify and define of the needs of youth in our area
- survey other agencies attempting to meet these needs
- assess gaps or overlaps and
- make specific recommendations.

In order to be effective, you must:
- understand and appreciate the goals and work of Christ's church
- be comfortable in an inner-city/ homeless mission setting
- work independently
- communicate well
- move easily about unassisted
- have an e-mail address.

Please mail, fax or e-mail your résumé with a one-page-ONLY statement about why this position interests you. Please do not call the Hall! Only those to be interviewed will be contacted. The deadline is April 30, 2001. Late applications will not be accepted.

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keep the ship of health from falling into the hands of pirates.

How completely out-of-touch with reality! The health care system, like the church, is not the exclusive domain of white, middle-class males (although a visitor from another planet might get that impression from looking at senior management in both organizations).

Please! In our church magazine, let us have some integrity with the reality of life. Women do occupy senior positions (the minister of health for Ontario at the time was a white woman). People from ethnic groups other than white do occupy church pews and hold ruling offices in the church. They, too, are health care professionals, struggling to keep the health care system afloat. In fact, they are in the majority in both systems — and in Canada.

Covers such as this perpetuate the myth that church and community life are about being male, white and middle class — all of which are completely untrue and may, in fact, be symptomatic of systemic and/or latent racism.

Catherine G. Chalin,
Toronto

Ministering to the under-30s

Dave Overholt's article in the February *Record* was both timely and encouraging. It will prove helpful to the strategic planning team of Lakeshore St. Andrew's Church in Windsor, Ontario, as we wrestle with the issue of productive ministry to a generation under 20 years of age.

We continue to experience significant growth in the population base over 30 years of age but understand how critical it will be the way we become effective with the next generation. At the same time, the Presbytery of Essex-Kent is seeking to develop a vital ministry out of the former Knox Church located adjacent to the University of Windsor.

There is little doubt the level of leadership required for ministry to this generation is greater than at perhaps any other time in history. Kudos to those differences in the lives of a generation whose " … loyalty is as short as their attention span."

Chuck Congram,
Tecumseh, Ont.

Risk-taking

I thoroughly enjoyed the February *Record* editorial. It brings to light the shortcomings in risk-taking we continually see in our church. At a meeting to restructure the session and other committees, we were reminded again that many, if not all, of our problems today are the same as those of yesterday; and we have failed to grab hold with zest and "risk" to bring about change. I looked around the group and only one individual was under 50. The rest were essentially grey-haired, who are going to run out of energy in the near future. Where will we find the young ones to take over and how do we develop their interest?

It was also noted last night that the group from our church who ran a dinner for Evangel Hall was made up of younger people. They are more interested in action than in what they consider boring meetings.

Al Beswick,
Toronto

Vital congregations

Your January editorial comments on Reginald Stackhouse's book *Alive Again*, with reference to "vital congregations." Your question whether theology should be our only aim, rather than the survival of congregations, is certainly a controversial and worrying point.

Many years ago, as a board member of a large and successful city church, I used the annual Blue Book to do a careful statistical analysis of the larger churches — larger in terms of recorded congregational numbers at least. The idea was to see if we could learn from any of them. It was illuminating, but I was troubled by one factor.

I met Finlay Stewart, minister of St. Andrew's Church in Kitchener, Ontario, only once briefly so never queried him on the matter. I had heard he was against the establishment of additional Presbyterian churches in the Kitchener area beyond his large congregation. Better one big, efficient, business-like central church than several local suburban ones. At the time, I think there was one other in the outskirts of Kitchener. The comparative figures in my study seemed to indicate he was right. More dollars per member, better use of funds, more in the Sunday school per 100 and so on. In almost every category, his church was either first or almost first across the board. Efficiency pays, seemed to be the message.

And, yet, is that the route to follow? Stewart certainly thought so. But is the "better," more Presbyterian path a more typically Canadian compromise between the large, efficient central congregation and the small, local, area service churches in the suburbs and outer city areas that operate closer to the financial and numbers margin. The quote in Recordings from the Study Group to Research Denominational Membership Decline indicates the smaller churches will likely suffer "budget creep" killing.

As usual, there is no best answer. But if survival of congregations is considered high on the agenda, it would seem more centralization — or could it be some ecumenism? — will be required. It's worth a reassessment.

Fraser McKee,
Markdale, Ont.

Misinformed?

In Joseph C. McLelland's article "The Horned Moses" (January *Record*), readers are given his definition of a bishop's mitre as "originally merely a staff, then with today's familiar curved horn."

Surely we have been misinformed! The *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* states a mitre is "a tall, deeply cleft head-dress worn by bishops and abbots." (Look up the word crosier. *It* is the "hooked staff carried by a bishop as a symbol of pastoral office" — like a shepherd's crook.)

Criticisms like this aside, I congratulate you on producing such an interesting and thought-provoking magazine.

Ann McJanet,
Nepean, Ont.

Author responds: *In my January column ("The Horned Moses"), I should have written: "In time, it influenced the shape of the bishop's mitre. Just as the staff became a shepherd's crosier, so the headdress grew two curved points or horns."*


Glen Davis

Stumbling blocks

On being committed to children and youth

After a long, hard day, the disciples of Jesus are ready to close up shop. Then some women appear, asking Jesus to lay his hands on their children and pray for them. The disciples block their way and tell them Jesus has better things to do. A voice of steel cuts the air: "Let the little children come to me. Do not stop them. The kingdom of God belongs to ones like these" (Matthew 19:13-14). Earlier, Jesus had warned his followers that it would be better if they had a huge millstone tied around their necks and were drowned in the sea than to put a stumbling block in front of one of the little ones (Matthew 18:6).

None of us wants to cause children and youth to stumble on their way to Jesus. But many of us do that, unintentionally, of course.

We do it when we glare at a mother whose child dares to make a noise in church. But that's what children do — make noises. If they don't, they're sick. So, if we want children in church, let's smile at them and at their parents when they make noises, and thank God they came.

We cause young people to stumble when we grumble about the marks on the floor or the walls after the youth group uses the hall. If what we want are spotless, pristine rooms in our church, we could simply stop using them. But our facilities are for ministry, not for looking pretty. Let's be sure our buildings are open to full and free use by youth.

We are stumbling blocks to young people by our unwillingness to try some of the music that speaks to youth. I know how precious the old hymns are. They are familiar; they nurture my spirit, and I love them. But my children don't. When I ask youth why they don't go to church, the most common reply is: "Man! That music, it sucks! Why can't we sing something that was written in the past 10 or 20 years?"

There are many marvellous new hymns and songs of the faith. They are upbeat, biblical and full of praise. Of course, there are also lots of shallow songs that don't deserve a place in worship. But let's pick the good ones and blend them into our worship. I'm not saying we should dump all the old hymns. Let's learn *some* new ones. If we want young people to come to church, the least we can do is give a little when it comes to music.

If we want children in church, let's smile at them and at their parents when they make noises, and thank God they came

We also cause youth to stumble when we refuse to spend money on them. We say we want youth in the church but vote against hiring staff to work with children and youth. We say we want children to grow in the faith but do not provide funds to help them attend Christian camps and conferences. We say we have no money for such "extras" while many churches are sitting on memorial funds and trust funds. We say we are keeping them for a "rainy day." Well, friends, it's RAINING! It's pouring. The youth are already leaving.

Our congregation is now in its third year of using memorial funds to send children to camp. The numbers have gone up each year. Sunday school attendance has improved. And the children/youth have had transforming experiences. This year, we are using another $5,000 of the memorial fund to match contributions from the congregation to help send 13 youth on a mission trip to Nicaragua.

I know of other congregations making similar commitments to children and youth. And they never regret it. This is the best investment we'll ever make as a church. At camps, PYPS conferences, Triennium and mission trips, young people meet Jesus Christ in a new way and their lives are transformed.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is still blessed with wonderful young people. I've been meeting them from coast to coast. My prayer is that all of us will do our part to remove the blocks that cause these children and youth to stumble on their way to Jesus.

"Let the little children come to me!"

Glen Davis

Moderator's itinerary

March 29 - April 6
Church leaders delegation to Mexico (Inter-Church Coalition on Human Rights in Latin America)

April 8 (evening)
Evangel Hall

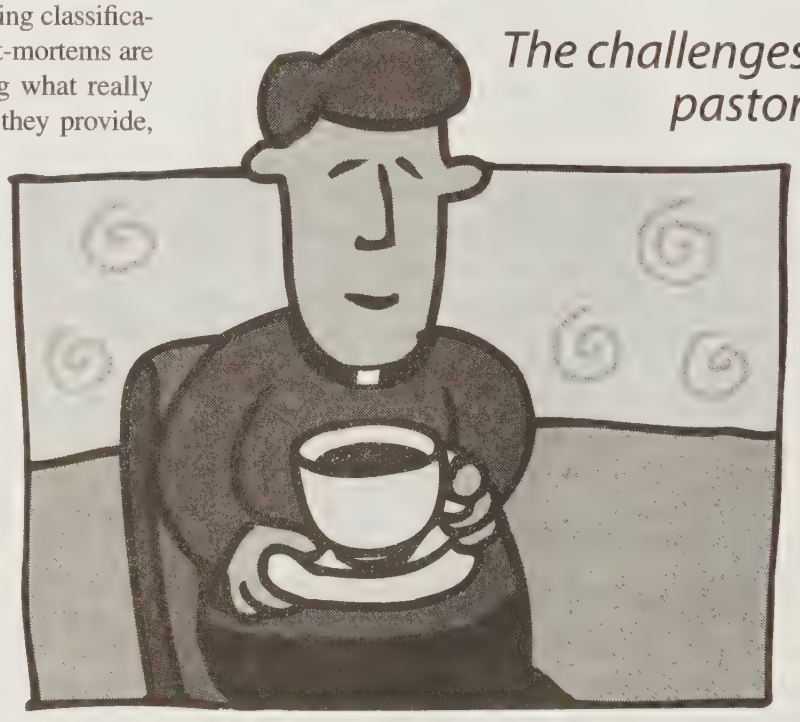
April 17 - May 3
Presbyteries of Cape Breton, Pictou, Prince Edward Island and St. John

The challenges of pastoral visiting

My dear editor:

Our last presbytery meeting ended early. For once there was little real business, and the attempt to create some didn't work. A suggestion was made to have an *ad hoc* discussion on conflict resolution, but we couldn't agree on how best to proceed.

So I found myself in a large corner booth at a nearby place of refreshment in the company of an assortment of elders of both the ruling and teaching classifications. These presbytery post-mortems are often useful in determining what really happened and, in the time they provide, allow the warm glow of fellowship to subside before we return to the hugger-mugger of ordinary life.



With little presbytery business to discuss, the conversation veered toward a rocky shoal common to us all, and stuck there — pastoral visiting. There is no doubt in my mind this is not a new challenge and/or vexation, But I thought the points raised, as I remember them, might be of interest, even in the face of all the "new" challenges and/or opportunities that descend like manna in our day (with about the same shelf life).

I do not intend to reproduce the conversation verbatim (or "word for word" in the parched and purged language of our church) or to attribute the sources like Lyle Schaller, scattering names as generously as raisins in a Tim Horton's muffin. Rather, I will summarize.

There are almost enough gregarious souls in pulpits and on sessions for whom pastoral visiting is not a chore.

There are more than enough timid souls for whom it is an ordeal.

There seem to be some bone-lazy souls for whom someone in a spiritual crisis on his deathbed, or even with a material crisis such as uncertainty as to whom to bequeath a million-dollar gift, would not be sufficient reason to stir.

Having a reason to visit helps. Every elder agreed Communion cards are, practically speaking, useless for recording attendance but decidedly useful when waved about as a "reason" to visit. Otherwise, people think you want money or someone to bake cookies.

Telephoning first helps a little, but the same suspicions apply, and the person telephoning feels like one of those people who calls at mealtimes to enquire about the state of your doors and windows. The clergy feel less like telemarketers than Fuller-Life salespersons. And most don't or can't or won't dress as well as Mormons.

Male clergy are intimidated by bathrooms. If they make appointments to visit in the *afternoons*, it is (almost by demographic necessity) likely they will do so with older women, widowed or never married. These women inevitably provide cups of tea or coffee, at least. Though appreciated and, especially, if the minister had more than one visit scheduled, he inevitably finds himself in a bathroom, replete with dainty guest towels, scented soaps shaped like little shells or flowers, and jars of pot-pourri. He is overcome — an invader in pristine space. This is a good argument, though no more are needed, for women clergy.

The difference between those who expect visits and those who don't want them is both sharp and mysterious. The former expect a visit if a distant brother-in-law is seriously ill or a second cousin has died, even if no one tells the minister or elder. The church's representatives are apparently equipped to know by instinct or empathetic radar of divine origin. The latter associate visits with the descent of the angel of death or, at least, an invasion of the church into the state of *Survivor* or *Coronation Street*.

With some people, *only* the minister's visit "counts." It doesn't matter if an elder or appointed pastoral visitor is better at the task and more at ease. The holy one of the tribe of Levi must come. The idea of fashioning a special clerical collar for lay visitors was considered and rejected — especially by ministers who don't wear a clerical collar.

Some of the clergy find visiting to be indispensable. They gather "clues" about people by taking note of the magazines, CDs, tapes and pictures displayed or easily visible. The ruling elders present thought they had better not make this bit of clergy-craft known. Not everyone can lay hands on the *Presbyterian Record* or *Architectural Digest*, or buy or borrow Amy Grant or Psalms sung by the Glasgow Orpheus Choir, or replace *Canadian Sunset* on the wall with *Praying Hands every* time the minister calls.

And, finally, almost *everyone* felt guilty about not visiting enough.

Yours insolubly,

Peter Plymley II

Leslie Shaw

One giant's step for humankind

The redeeming work of the Sleeping Giant Refugee Committee

Every month, a motley group of people gathers at First Church, Thunder Bay, Ontario. Laypeople of various faiths and races, a minister, an elder or two — together, they make up the Sleeping Giant Refugee Committee. The membership fluctuates: anyone who attends a meeting is automatically a member with voting rights. Yet, this small group has been responsible for welcoming hundreds of refugees to Canada over the past 20-plus years.

How do they do it? That same question came up when Presbyterian World Service and Development held a conference on refugee sponsorship last October. The answer lies in the "motleyness" of the committee, in the fact that the resources, talents, energy, ideas, commitment and faith that go into making Sleeping Giant successful come from people from all walks of life. It is a committee in the best sense.



Winning Kennedy, from Burma, and Abdi, from Somalia, two of the hundreds of refugees helped by the Sleeping Giant Refugee Committee.

Originating as a private response to the Vietnamese Boat People crisis in the 1970s, Sleeping Giant has been affiliated with various churches over the years, leading to its current home at First Church. The group has been an active participant in the ever-changing (but always with us) world of refugees, sponsoring people from places such as Central America, Ethiopia, Bosnia, Guatemala, Somalia, Burma and Sierra Leone.

The paperwork has changed and so have the rules. Doors that were once open have been shut. Fortunately, other doors have opened. By developing liaisons with many local businesses and organizations, the committee has woven a web of support for the refugees, with a network that provides help with language, résumé preparation, finding a job and housing. Members of the congregation and friends donate clothing, linen, furniture, appliances and money. Equally important are the intangibles of friendship and personal support. The underlying assumption is that almost all the basics are obtained at little or no cost to the committee. Most claimants are housed and fed by relatives; other sponsors plan on contributing about $1,000 monthly per person.

A typical settlement story begins with a letter — usually a plea for help from someone who obtained Sleeping Giant's address by word of mouth or at a United Nations office somewhere. Sometimes, the letter is brought to the committee by a relative living in Thunder Bay. Sometimes, Immigration brings the case to its attention. More than 500 such pleas are received each year, and committee coordinator Willa Jones has the unenviable task of sifting through them, looking for those that are a good fit with the committee's resources.

Next, the claimant is informed of the committee's requirements that have to be in place before the case can be considered. The claimant must provide a detailed personal history, explaining why it is dangerous to return to his/her country of origin. The sponsors must provide a letter of support stating their ability to

care for the refugee. (The committee has created a form approved by Immigration and The Presbyterian Church in Canada that provides all the pertinent facts about the claimant.) Once everything is in place and the claim has been approved, first by the committee and then by the session of First Church, it is sent to Presbyterian World Service and Development, and from there to the proper authorities.

Then the hard part begins: waiting. The wait can take months, even years. Adding to the frustration is the fact that 50 per cent of approved claims do not result in refugees moving to Canada. In the past year, Sleeping Giant had 30 arrivals and 32 rejections. The explanations for the rejections vary. Sometimes, health concerns are cited. Other times, the home country is deemed safe. Some claimants are considered not to be refugees, while others are only allowed to stay in a third country, whether or not they are able to obtain work there. This can be disappointing and discouraging to a congregation geared up to help settle a family. Preparation is reduced to keeping in touch with the claimant and badgering Immigration.

Many new refugees attend services at First Church. Gradually, members of the congregation come to know the unfamiliar faces, learn to chat with someone who has limited English and find ways to help. In the process, their own lives are enriched. The church discovers what a blessing such new families can be — an opportunity to express faith in a time of need and to rediscover humility and gratefulness.

The Sleeping Giant Refugee Committee relies heavily on faith and trust. Without the freely offered gifts of many people, refugees could not be welcomed. The committee hopes other congregations will consider participating in refugee sponsorship. R

Those wishing to help or to learn more about refugee sponsorship can contact Willa Jones at candu@microage.com or First Presbyterian Church at presby@baynet.net.

Leslie Shaw is an elder at First Church, Thunder Bay, Ont., and a member of the Sleeping Giant Refugee Committee since September 2000.

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Reid Chudley

The silence of camp

Camp provides opportunities for transforming miracles in young lives

If you have been involved in camp ministry, you may find the title of this article confusing. Times of silence at camp are few and far between. Yet, in those rare and beautiful moments, we find miracles — we find the Lord.

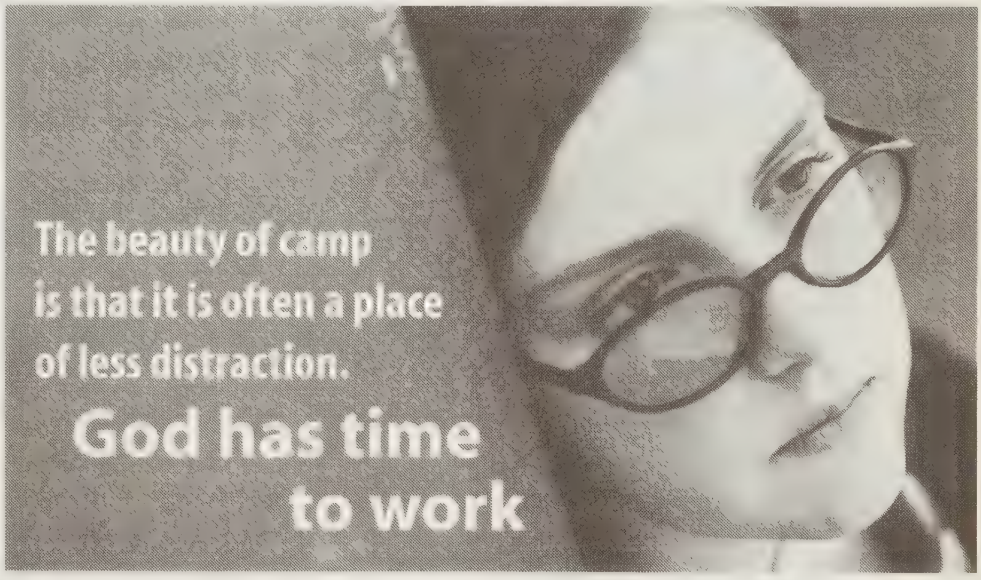
God came to Elijah in the soft, gentle breeze after the fire and the earthquake. Jesus sought out the peace and solitude of the desert and of the garden before the Crucifixion. For two millenniums, countless faithful have looked for the peace and quiet of majestic cathedrals or secluded monasteries.

Sadly, with the rapid growth of technology and the busyness of our lives, those quiet places have become fewer and not so quiet. Where do kids go today to hear and experience God? Many between the ages of six and 17 equate quiet with punishment. Parents remove television privileges as punishment. They send children to their rooms to be quiet. Failure to gain expected grades results in no Playstation, CDs or e-mail for a month. Suddenly, they *have* to be quiet. ("Great!" shout the parents and youth leaders.) But will youth hear anything in this imposed silence?

The other part of listening in silence is waiting. When will God speak? The beautiful answer is, when God is ready. The beauty of camp is that it is often a place of less distraction. God has time to work. Have you ever tried to explain something to a young person between the ages of six and 17 that takes more than 30 seconds? God has his work cut out.

I have seen lives change at camp. I have seen teenagers with hardened hearts transformed into loving beings, wanting to share the grace they have received with others. Thinking about how many youngsters are discipled in our camps excites me. I praise God that I have the opportunity to be a part of those experiences. I know camp isn't the only way to disciple young lives; but I have seen the results, and they make me hopeful.

Why is camp so important to me? I'm like the president of the Hair Club for Men — the guy who says, "I'm not just the president, I'm also a client." I am not only a counsellor or a camp director, I am the client and product of a camp I attended when I was 14. There, I had the needed time to meet God and experience the Holy Spirit in a way that was real and unforgettable. I would like every young person to receive that opportunity.



Perhaps readers can recall their powerful experiences as young people at camps or retreats. Why then, I wonder, do camps face constant financial strains? Why is it always so hard to find volunteers? Did God fail to call or did we, as leaders, elders and mentors of young people, fail to listen and to answer? On Vancouver Island last summer, we cancelled one of our camp sessions. The result: up to 65 kids, ages eight to 12, may have missed the most important experience of their lives.

So I ask you to stop. Literally, stop! Listen for the call to minister to future ministers, prophets, teachers, worship leaders, community members and parents. These young lives are waiting to be unleashed on the world, to reach out to the world in faith and love. Please, take the time to contact your local camping committee or board to see what you can do for your camp. No one is too old. No donation is too small. R

Reid Chudley, a recent graduate of the University of Victoria, leads a youth group in his own congregation at Knox Church, Victoria, as well as being active in youth and camp activities in the presbytery and synod.



Some of the new Canadians at Lumsden Beach, Sask., July 1921.
The United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Toronto.

"Under God's sunshine and moonlight"

Early Presbyterian camping

by Peter Bush

Church camps have provided renewal and inspiration for 90 years

Camping has a long and distinguished history in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Many camps across the country are preparing to celebrate 50th or even 60th anniversaries. The history of camping in the denomination, however, goes back 90 years to the time immediately before the First World War.

Fresh Air Camps, as they were called, gave mothers and children "relief from the heat of the cities." Focused primarily on inner-city children and families, these camps were an outgrowth of the work of the settlement houses and other inner-city missions operated by the denomination in Canada's largest cities. Along with giving families a break from the summer heat of the city, the camping experience provided "moral as well as physical renewal."

The early family camps were markedly different from the majority of the summer camping experiences enjoyed today by young people at church-operated camps, where children attend camp without their parents. Another underlying assumption of early Presbyterian camping leaders was that the fathers of these families, if a father was in the picture, would be working at jobs in the city while their families were at camp.

Many who went to fresh air camps were able to pay only a small portion of the cost. Generous donors in suburban churches underwrote the balance. A number of the campers were recent arrivals to Canada, and the very idea of camping in the Canadian wilderness was new and strange.

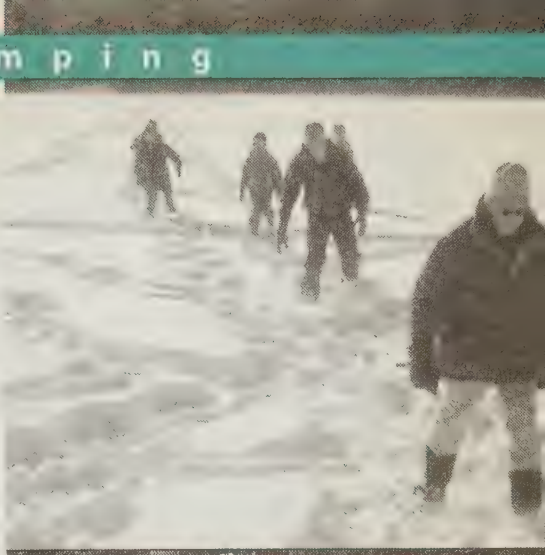
The earliest reference I found to Presbyterian-operated fresh air camps is the summer of 1911. Robertson Memorial Institute in Winnipeg purchased 10 acres of land north of the city on Lake Winnipeg near Gimli. And, in the summer of 1915 (less than a year after the end of the First World War), St. Christopher House in Toronto was operating a camp on the

shores of Lake Scugog, northeast of Toronto. The two camps cared for 1,000 mothers and children during that summer. By the summer of 1923, fresh air camps were also connected to the work of the two settlement houses in Montreal (Chalmers and St. Columba) and another to the work of First Church and Community House in Vancouver. In 1923, 2,000 mothers and children took advantage of this camping experience. The camp on the shores of Lake Winnipeg was the busiest that year, hosting more than 800 campers.

There was a general pattern to the camps. At first, camps ran for a week but, in the 1920s, the standard length had become 10 days. The camp staff included both paid personnel from the settlement houses sponsoring the camp and volunteers from Presbyterian congregations in the area. The staff prepared the meals and organized programs and games, planning "for every hour of the day, and every hour was supervised." The mothers had only two responsibilities: to make their beds and to bathe their babies. Camp was to be as much a holiday for them as for their children.

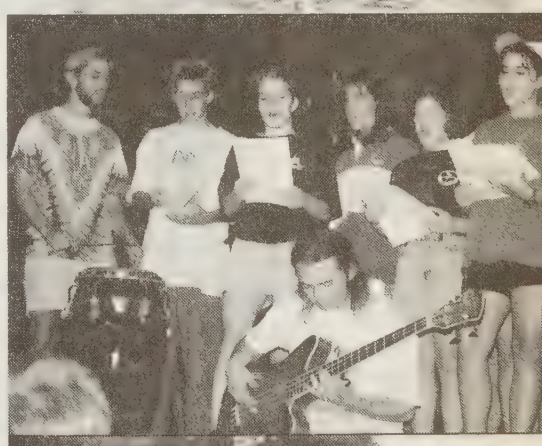
The camp day started at 7 a.m. with the wake-up bell and, almost immediately, the call to breakfast. Family devotions followed with everyone together, and the program for the day was announced. The program included flag-raising and camp chores. The camp at Lake Scugog was a working farm, so campers were involved in actual farming. At Gimli, the program might include taking a walk to the lighthouse, a hike through the woods, a visit with one of the local fishers, picking up the evening supper or a trip to the strawberry patch. Rest time followed lunch. The afternoon was spent on the beach, on a lake or on the riverbank. The fresh air camp at Cushing, Quebec, was on the shores of the Ottawa River, downriver from Hawkesbury, Ontario. After supper, there might be games, an impromptu concert or a bonfire. At 8:30, the day ended with "evening song and prayer."

The program at each camp was affected by physical and personnel resources available. The more established camps had buildings designed to meet their needs. At Gimli, a camp lodge contained the dining-room and a sitting-room with a large fireplace on the main level. A screened-in porch looked out to the lake and, upstairs, were sleeping quarters. Mothers and children at Gimli were housed in cabins. At Cushing, the camp consisted of a large manse and its glebe located on the river. The manse served as the lodge, and campers were housed in the manse and in tents surrounding it. What Cushing had that Gimli did not was a nearby church; therefore, family devotions in the evening were held at the church, and "church-going was a real event." The Vancouver Community House was offered the use of a secularly owned fresh air camp located on the ocean. They had a ready-made camp facility to work with and none of the maintenance and ongoing upkeep concerns to worry about. Being seaside influenced the programs. The St. Christopher Camp on Lake Scugog had its own train station on the CPR rail line, making the transportation of campers to and from Toronto easy.











Images of Presbyterian camping today —
Top photo: Gracefield Camp; centre two photos: Glen Mhor Camp; bottom two photos: Presbyterian Music Camp.

Recognizing the importance of camping in the church's ministry with children, youth and young adults, the General Assembly's Committee on History is in the process of gathering historical materials. We are interested in material about camps operated by synods, presbyteries and congregations. We would like to know the names and dates of operation of all Presbyterian camps. Some may have written histories, either brief or detailed. We would also like some indication of what kinds of historical documents related to camping people have in their possession: minutes of board meetings, summer schedules and brochures, daily camp schedules, program material, Bible study resources, songbooks, skits and so on. If you would be willing to be interviewed about your involvement with Presbyterian camping, the committee would like to hear from you so that your memories can be added to the oral history collection. If you have questions about the kind of material we are looking for, or wish to send material, contact: Peter Bush, Box 235, Mitchell, Ont. N0K 1N0; knoxmit@quadro.net; (519) 348-9080.

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Synod of Alberta
Camp Kannawin, Sylvan Lake

Synod of British Columbia
Camp Douglas
Camp VIP

Contact Brian Doyle at church offices, 1-800-619-7301, Ext. 268, for further information on these camps; bdoyle@presbyterian.ca.

Mothers and children thrived in the camping environment. Children who were constantly hungry at home ate as much as they wanted. In fact, at the last breakfast at the Gimli camp, five boys finished off 19 large helpings of porridge between them, and another boy told the camp director he had let out his belt two notches while at camp. One mother was so moved by the generosity of the people who paid her way to attend camp she insisted on scrubbing the dining-room floor on her last night at camp as her token of thanks. Another mother, at her wit's end about how to discipline her two-year-old, found support and help in talking to the staff and other mothers at camp. Humorous and joyous things at camp stayed in people's minds: the woman who went swimming for the first time in her life, the cow that ate dishcloths right off the clothesline, the amusing things children said. All this was happening "in God's beautiful out-of-doors."

Camp was a place where people heard the gospel message away from the concerns of everyday life. They had opportunities to talk to staff about their lives and ask questions about the Christian faith. Campers saw staff living the Christian faith on a moment-by-moment basis. Through social, educational, emotional and spiritual interaction with the staff, they came to see the life of the Christian in a different light. Being in an explicitly Christian environment reignited the flames of faith in people's lives, flames that had burned low or gone out. Heartily singing old, familiar hymns was one of the most powerful ways to fan the coals of faith. Some who had not darkened the door of a church in years found camp a place to recommit themselves to following the Triune God. At Cushing in 1921, one woman took her first Communion and her four children were baptized. As the camps reached out to recently arrived Canadians, the church sought to live the gospel message through both actions and words. And, in the process, women and boys and girls heard about the good news of Jesus Christ.

Camps were among the most useful and most effective tools of inner-city missions. Away from the hustle and bustle of normal life, campers found "tongues on trees, books in the running brooks, sermons on stones and good in everything." As was said of the 1915 camping year, "Lives are saved — and souls too." R

Peter Bush is minister of Knox Church, Mitchell, Ont.

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Youth ministry in small churches

by Spencer Edwards

You don't need a youth group to have youth ministry

We live in a "bigger is better" world.

We have mega-malls, super-sized fast-food combos, big-box retail, and gigantiplex movie theatres. Bigger must be better!

And, sadly, the church has jumped right on board! Ministers of large churches are celebrities. Christian magazines (not the *Record*, of course!) focus only on people who have done BIG things for God.

Unfortunately, youth ministry is no different. Most of the out-of-the-box youth ministry programs available are designed with large membership churches and youth groups in mind. Programs and curricula are designed for large churches, partially because they are the ones who can afford to pay for them, and these become the standard for all congregations. I particularly love the curricula containing instructions like "Divide your youth group into teams of 10." The reality is most churches in North America do not have enough youth group members to make even one team!

The small church youth ministry is plagued by a plethora of false assumptions! In his book *Great Ideas for Small Youth Groups*, Wayne Rice identifies a couple of key myths. The first of these myths is that nothing works with a small youth group. We have come to believe this myth because of the proliferation of resources and the attention paid to large-scale youth groups and youth ministries. We see them as the norm. And, of course, many of the activities designed with a large demographic in mind will not work for the small group. Faced with resources and models of youth ministry geared for large numbers and with the inevitable comparison to the "Teen Tabernacle" youth ministry at the church down the way with its 100 young people, small churches often despair and give up on youth ministry altogether. This is unfortunate because small youth groups have real strength for ministry that is too often overlooked.

For example, relationships always appear as number 1 or number 2 on lists of what is most important to young people. A small group can provide an intimacy not available in larger groups. Big churches must create small groups in order to experience what small congregations already possess. Small youth groups provide a greater opportunity for authentic relationships to develop and are less dependent on clever programming. A small group has greater flexibility and simpler logistics. When the group decides to do something, it is not necessary to hire a bus or recruit six chaperones.

The second myth is that every church needs a youth group. What the church has forgotten is that the youth group is only one of many models. It was developed for a certain time and context. It was an attempt to minister effectively to young people. But, in time, the ends became confused with the means. Rather than nurturing young people in the life of faith, our goal became to have a youth group. Often, sadly, little happens in the youth group that would achieve the

What makes [small church] youth ministry work?

- Congregations don't try to copy [large church] models. They meet local needs and interests.
- Ministry is primarily relational, not programmatic. And those relationships reach across generations.
- Ministry reaches beyond the church building and into the everyday lives of young people.
- Young people are valued for who they are and where they are in life. Children and youth are encouraged to use their gifts in practical ways.
- Youth ministry and leadership development are virtually synonymous. Young people are encouraged and needed to take leadership roles as soon as they are ready.
- Small congregations provide rich opportunities for mature faith formation. Faith and action are connected over time in a community that lives with high levels of interdependence and accountability.

— Lisa Kimball, youth ministry co-ordinator for the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota.

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original end. It becomes a crime when congregations assume they can no longer minister to young people because they cannot have a youth group.

So it becomes important for congregations to consider other models. Nothing in the Bible says churches must have a youth group. Youth ministry does not necessarily equal youth group. Expanding our thinking about youth ministry allows the freedom to determine what form it should take in a given context to achieve the desired outcomes.

I like the definition of youth ministry that states it is ministry to/by/for/with young people. Ministry "to" youth includes the things the church does to meet the needs of young people (organizing activities, providing pastoral care, etc.). Ministry "by" youth consists of those things young people do in the church and the world (peer support, teaching church school, working at a homeless shelter, etc.). Ministry "for" youth is about advocating for the needs of young people in the church and wider community. Ministry "with" youth includes anything adults and youth do in partnership (intergenerational events, worship, mission projects, etc.).

Nurturing faith in the lives of the congregation's children and youth requires many more people than one director of youth and family ministry. It requires uncles, aunts, godparents, grandparents, parents, mentors, neighbours and friends. These are the people the director of youth and family ministry must equip for ministry.

— Dick Hardel

This concept allows for an expanded and liberating understanding of youth ministry. It gives congregations permission to dream the means that will best work in their contexts. This must be done with the end(s) clearly in mind. If the desired outcome is biblical knowledge, then an intergenerational softball team is not an appropriate model to choose.

The following are a few of the approaches from which a small congregation may select:

Youth group: Yes, even though it can be problematic when it is seen as the only way to go, sometimes it does work well. The important focus here should be that a team of youth and adults do the planning and carry out the leadership together.



A group of young people and leaders from Ivy Church in Thornton, Ont., at a garage sale. They raised funds to send four young people to Canada Youth 2000 at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ont. L to R: Jason, Dennis, Myrna, Erin, Melissa, Susan, Debbie, Jeff.

Mission and service: The focus is on involving young people in mission and service locally, nationally and internationally. Young people are energetic and want to make a difference. Even one or two can sign up to participate in a Youth in Mission project of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Mentoring: The purpose is to create a relationship with an adult who will model what it means to be a person of faith. It is much like an apprentice system where a young person goes to work with a successful person to learn a trade. A young person is linked to an adult mentor for study, service and fellowship. A good biblical example is that of Samuel who went to the temple to live and work and find God's call under the tutelage of the old priest, Eli. Research by the Search Institute has revealed that, up to the age of 16, the most influential people in terms of faith are family; but, after 16, someone outside of the family who models the faith usually has the most influence.

Clustering/co-operating: Congregations wanting that "critical mass" of youth may work together (often ecumenically) to provide youth ministry.

Profession of faith/Confirmation: If the goal is to bring young people into the service of Christ and the church, a congregation may choose to focus more on initiating young people into the community of faith in terms of making this a more significant event. Some congregations have launched a two-year program in this connection that involves mission and service as well as the traditional communicant classes. The emphasis is on the young person becoming a responsible member of the congregation.

Sponsoring/sending: The congregation supports and promotes existing denominational or non-denominational and parachurch activities. Every year in North America, a Youth Triennium is held involving Presbyterian young people from Canada, the United States and their global partners. For many young people, this event has been a life-changing experience. They return energized and excited about the possibilities in their local congregation. They come back knowing they belong to something big, and that deeper involvement in their own congregation is critical for them. The next Triennium is in July at Purdue University in Indiana. Regional conferences, Rise Up and Canada West, are offered by synods working together. Last summer, Canada Youth 2000, a national gathering for Presbyterian youth, young adults and youth leaders, was held at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. Presbyterian Young Peoples Societies and other presbytery and synod organizations may offer camps and youth conferences. Congregations can encourage young people to attend these events and assist in fund raising.

For further reflection and action

First, consider:

- What is our congregation best at or best known for?
- What are our greatest strengths?
- What is causing us to do well in these areas?

Then consider:

- What are the desired outcomes of our youth ministry?
- Who are the youth with whom God is calling us to be in ministry?
- What changes are we prepared to make for youth ministry?
- What is God calling us to do and be with young people?

Finally:

- Consider who we are, the blessings/challenges of our situation, and what we believe God is calling us to do.
- How can we build on our strengths to be effective in ministry to/by/for/with youth?

Resources

www.youthspecialties.com (great resources, articles, links to other sites, a one-stop shopping centre for youth ministry)

Making Disciples by William Willimon (a Confirmation kit that has a mentoring component)

The Godbearing Life by Kendra Creasy Dean and Ron Foster, Upper Room (a fabulous resource that gets to the heart of youth ministry)

The Roots of Who We Are by Rodger Nishioka, Bridge Resources (thinking about youth ministry within a Presbyterian/Reformed tradition. Every Presbyterian should read this book.)

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Family-based: The congregation focuses on equipping parents and developing an intentional intergenerational community. Equipping parents for their work as the primary nurturers of their children's faith has been an essentially untapped resource in youth ministry. Churches can learn to be as intentional about equipping parents as they are about developing programs for children and youth. Congregations can also create opportunities for young people to be around to talk to and to minister with the adults of their extended church family.

Interest-centred: Find an interest and run with it. Some youth ministries of this type have focused on drama, music (instrumental or choir), service projects, sports, fixing cars, dirt bikes — you name it.

Retreat-centred: The focus is on a series of retreats. This approach can build community and provide concentrated time together without the usual distractions.

Youth-friendly: Young people are intentionally incorporated into all aspects of the life and mission of the church. The congregation ensures that weekly worship in all its aspects includes youth concerns. Young people are consulted about the music. They participate in meaningful ways beyond washing dishes after the pancake supper.

"For instance," Lisa Kimball, of the Episcopal Church in the United States, suggests, "in a congregation of less than 100 members, the 85-year-old volunteer organist is going to be away for a month so the members welcome a 14-year-old who wants to play piano for worship. There is a time during announcements for John to invite the congregation to see him perform in the high school play. No one thinks twice about giving a group of high school girls the keys to the church so they can finish painting the kitchen on the weekends. Hospital visits are often far away, so an adult-youth team provides a perfect combination of enthusiasm, experience and warmth at the bedside."

These suggestions should not be seen as mutually exclusive. You may wish to take several to build the appropriate youth ministry for your congregation.

I'm not sure why we've bought into this "bigger is better" mind-set. It isn't found in the Gospels. There, Jesus teaches about tiny mustard seeds, lost coins and the importance of the one missing sheep. If we begin to talk about church as the family of God, we can help bypass the size preoccupation. We would not speak of a large family being better than a small family! They are merely different. Each has its own strengths and weakness, opportunities and challenges.

Youth ministry in the small church can be faithful, vital and effective. In fact, most of the creative and solid stuff I see in my travels is taking place in small churches. Youth ministry should be about the gospel values of faith, hope and love, not the cultural values of big, bigger and biggest. R

Spencer Edwards is the synod youth consultant of the Synod of Southwestern Ontario, The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

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The stuff of life

by Margaret Brouillette

Jesus used the stuff of life to communicate spiritual and eternal values



In the Amazon jungle, indigenous people wearing not much more than a tan have a hard time understanding what it means to be washed as white as snow. What is snow? And who needs to be washed?

Missionaries try to explain that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who takes care of his sheep. For hunters and foragers, it seems absurd for anyone to baby-sit animals, let alone strange wooly creatures that have the annoying habit of wandering off.

Bible translators struggle to give meaning to images that are unfamiliar to remote people groups. And Sunday school teachers struggle to describe ancient eastern sacrifices, wineskins and fig trees to modern western students.

We all agree Jesus was the great teacher, the ultimate story-teller, the parable man in person. But does that mean the examples he used to explain the kingdom are the best for kids in the 21st century? If mustard seed was good enough for Jesus, does that mean it's good enough for me?

When Jesus used parables, he did more than describe the kingdom. He showed us how to teach. Jesus used the stuff of life to communicate spiritual and eternal principles.

To begin with, Jesus understood to whom he was talking. He talked about seeds and sheep to farmers, about coins and kings to Romans, about religion and hypocrisy to priests, about love and forgiveness to prostitutes. And if he were walking among us today, he would talk about Nintendo games and Gothic games, keyboards and car keys, fads and friends.

To a child struggling with the concept of faith, pull out a chair. Ask him if he can describe the chair, if he believes the chair is there. That is not faith. Invite him to sit on the chair. That is faith. That is trust. That is giving himself, confident the chair will not let him down. For older children, this is best illustrated when one person is blindfolded and lets himself fall into another's arms. (In the interest of avoiding lawsuits, make sure the "catcher" is not a practical joker.)

The principle of losing and finding is an easy one to relate to, but the shepherd with 99 sheep is out of context for most of us. What about the Missing Children's Network? How does a family feel when a child is lost? What are parents ready to do/give up to find their child? How do they feel when she is found? How is that like God?

The classic example of unselfish love is the Good Samaritan. But not many of us have ever been attacked by robbers on the long hike between two cities. What about the long hike between two classes? How do kids today get hurt, rejected, robbed of something precious? Why do we look the other way and pretend it's not happening? How can another young person come along and heal that hurt?

When your teaching session is interrupted by a line of fire trucks driving past, or a police or ambulance siren, think as Jesus did. When he saw a young child, he picked him up and taught a kingdom principle. When he was caught in a storm, the storm became his lesson. Don't fight to get the students' attention back on the curriculum. Work with their new focus. A fire is a good way to talk about treasure on earth or treasure in heaven. An ambulance is a sobering reminder that life is fragile. A storm outside is a startling display of God's power and majesty.

From the Amazon forest-dweller to the first-century Jew to the contemporary child, the message must still be the same. Looking around at the stuff of life will show us how to send it. R

Margaret Brouillette is a mother, a public school religious education teacher and a Sunday school director in Saint Luc, Que. Her first book, *Famous Jerks of the Bible*, is due to be released in the summer.

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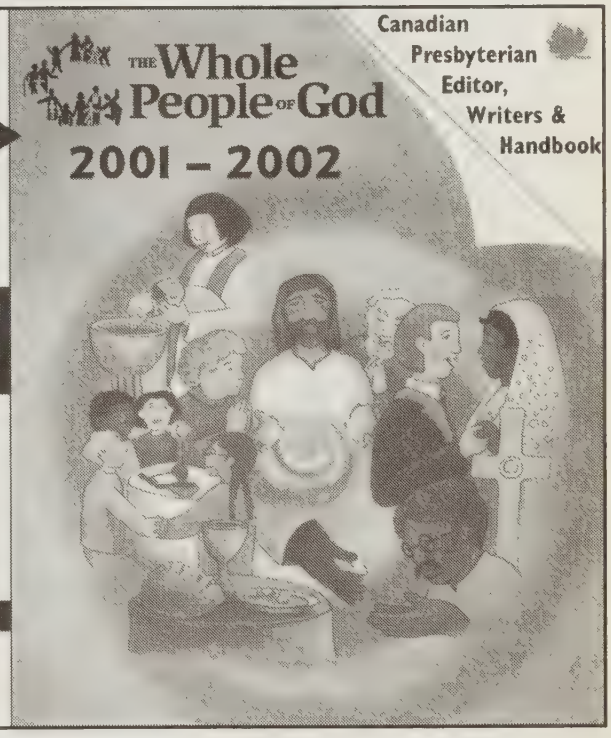
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Maurice Cosyn's *The Last Supper*



It's the seating arrangements that grab you first. Two tables positioned like a cross, Jesus at the head, Judas at the foot. This is not your formula painting of the Last Supper. Then, you begin to notice the details, details that reveal the depth of feeling the painting holds for its creator.

Maurice Cosyn is a member of the session, the board of managers and the choir of St. Paul's Church, Ingersoll, Ontario. When those activities aren't keeping him busy, he is also an artist. And when Lonnie Atkinson, minister of St. Paul's, told him he would like to have a painting of the Last Supper for the church dining hall, Cosyn saw it as the opportunity to fulfil a longtime ambition. The Last Supper is one of two scenes he has always wanted to paint (the other is the Pied Piper, which he sees as symbolic of modern life).

"The whole idea of eating supper shows the good life we are leading, but also the decisions we have to make," Cosyn says. "This was Jesus' last chance at us, and we lost through Judas." Judas represents the betrayal of trust found in all society. He had a decision to make, as we all do, Cosyn believes.

In Cosyn's painting, Jesus' eyes do not follow you as you move, as in countless black velvet renditions of the scene. Instead, they stare back at you intently. In fact, both Jesus and Judas are staring out from the painting. Both seem to be pleading for understanding. Judas, startled by Jesus' words, has spilled his wine, symbolizing the spilling of Christ's blood by his betrayal. The other disciples are pictured in animated conversation. Except for the bright robes they are wearing (and, perhaps, the odd hair-style), they could be people you know — your Uncle Bob, your chiropodist or your next-door neighbour. Roman columns and characteristics represent Roman power at the time. The tables are covered with white linen, embroidered with a Roman running fret border. The painting medium is gouache, an opaque water-colour treated with several layers of varnish to seal and protect it. It is on a foam core board, approximately one metre by 1.5 metres.

Although Lonnie Atkinson was "a great resource," consulted frequently over the three months Cosyn spent creating the painting, he did not see the work until it was completed. His reaction? "I was deeply awed," Atkinson says. "This a great gift not only to St. Paul's Church but to the church as a whole — throughout the world. I hope we will find a way to share it with others."

"This was Jesus' last chance at us, and we lost through Judas"

Eight years ago, Maurice Cosyn and his wife, Isobel, were attracted to St. Paul's by the warmth of the congregation and its minister. They made it their church home. Now, Maurice has contributed some warmth of his own, a warmth that can be felt by all who pass his poignant painting on the way into St. Paul's sanctuary. R

On going gentle

by Joseph C. McLelland

Mordecai Richler tells of dropping in at Sardi's in New York. A lady accosted him with: "I know you ... you're one of the old-timers, aren't you?" Richler nodded. *"Who were you?"* she demanded.

Everyone is entitled to 15 minutes of fame, according to Andy Warhol. For us golden oldies, it's mostly in the past. One of the harder aspects to the aging process is accepting the succession of youth — the new kids in the hall who face the same old questions and give the same old answers, including bad ones. It seems history does repeat itself, each generation having to make up its own mind about the shape of reality.

On the other hand, age brings a sense of proportion, knowing that what has endured is best, that there is a "classical" stream that imposes its authority, providing a "canon" of truth. This should be obvious for the Church that was founded on historical events, not on spiritual heroics. The Apostles are authoritative for us as the original *witnesses*, seeing for themselves the life and times of Jesus of Nazareth. As Kierkegaard once remarked, Paul is credible not because he was a genius but because he was *there*.

If Christ rose, so will we; if he did not, neither will we

This rather obvious line of meditation leads me to a different point. Having begun thus, how does it all *end*? Isn't it the goal that counts, the end of all our affairs? This is clearly what comes to mind at my age, a survivor who now reads obituaries regularly and attends too many funerals. I see only two choices. (None of this humanist stuff that the values thrown up in the evolutionary process will somehow endure.) Either what we value — truth, beauty, goodness — springs from an Other, or there's Nothing up ahead. Blaise Pascal, shrewd mathematician and statistician, once portrayed it as a kind of cosmic gamble, betting our lives on the best probability.

But, if the original witnesses are credible, if the "prophets and apostles" are reliable guides to the human Story, it's not so much a gamble as a syllogism, a fact of logic. Paul got that right, in stark language: if Christ rose, so will we; if he did not, neither will we.

Remember that disturbing passage (Hebrews 6) calling us to "leave the elementary doctrines of Christ and go on to maturity"? Among the former basic truths, it includes "the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment." Hold on there! The unknown author of The Letter to the Hebrews goes too far. Are resurrection and eternal judgment *preliminary* matters, merely the milk of Gospel taken for granted as we explore more meaty doctrine? In his case (or *hers*? — maybe Priscilla wrote it, as former Knox College principal Stanley Glen liked to suggest), it involves the continuing priesthood of Christ, like Melchizedek's, the heavenly sanctuary patterned on the ancient Tabernacle in all its allegorical detail. And the way of faith and

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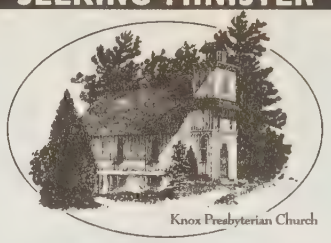
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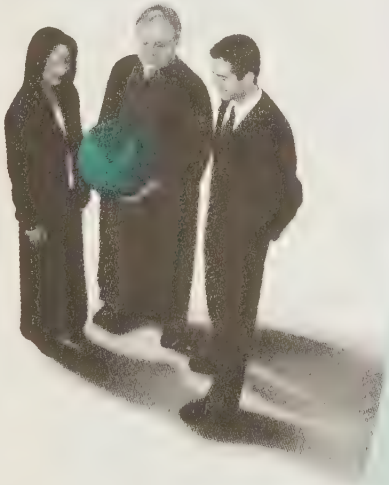
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martyrdom, that marvellous Chapter 11, a kind of genealogy of saints.

When I used to try to teach undergraduates something called "philosophy of religion," one topic was immortality. In *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?* New Testament scholar Oscar Cullmann makes the point that if you have the first you don't need the second. My young students — like myself as a young professor — approached the topic as interesting, speculative, debatable. Each year, as I grew older and they stayed forever young, I noticed the growing gap between their understanding and mine. I drew nearer the reality; it had become "existential" for me. Now, it's no longer a question of whether but of when and how. Like others of my generation, I'd like to "make a good death," as they used to say. No artificial prolonging of a life that belongs to God, no experimentation to see what works for a little more quantity of mere existence. After all, it's *my* death!

When his father died, the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas penned those stirring lines:

Do not go gentle into that good night;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light…

Ah, yes, he was right on this at least: we *should* be angry if the light dies and what's left is only darkness. If that were so, one could not console the dying with hope, nor the grieving with comfort. One might invoke "whatever gods may be" in behalf of one's own self-reliance, as Henley once did; but that's like Baron von Munchausen pulling himself (and horse) out of the mire by his pigtail. *But* if death has lost its sting …

It's not a question of knowing "the furniture of heaven or the temperature of hell" (Reinhold Niebuhr). It's more like trusting a Guide who knows the way, and the place we're aiming at. Let's suggest a gloss on the passionate poet:

Do thou go gentle into that good night,
whose dark is light enough to see
our Pioneer of destiny,
welcoming Home. R

Joseph C. McLelland is emeritus professor of McGill University and The Presbyterian College, Montreal, and a contributing editor of this magazine.



Planned Giving

Inside

- Hilarious Giving
- It took a church presentation on Planned Giving
- What others say about the stewardship of assets
- Planned Giving in a nutshell

Planned Giving — What do you mean?

By Keith Knight

She was a feisty retiree. She had been a widow for 10 years, still drove around town in her mid-sized car, and sang in the church choir. She was active and in reasonably good health.

"What on earth does 'planned giving' mean?", she asked over a cup of tea. "I put my money in the offering plate every Sunday and, if there is a special need, I put in a bit extra."

We were life-long friends so we could speak frankly. She'd have it no other way. She was living in a modest home and it was mortgage-free. She and Harold had been frugal all of their married life; didn't spend a penny if they didn't have to. They both had good-paying jobs during their working years so they were able to put aside a fair bit. They had savings accounts, Canada Savings Bonds, stocks and bonds. When Harold passed away, he left a tidy sum in a life insurance policy to make sure that she was well looked after.

She was still receiving a reasonably good pension which, when combined with the government pension, was enough to meet her modest needs. She hardly touched Harold's life insurance money.

"You've got a nice little nest egg," I said. "In fact, it's a pretty good nest egg. What do you intend to do with it?"

She seemed somewhat taken aback. "Do with it? Nothing, really. Leave it to the kids, I guess, even though they don't really need it."

"Planned giving," I said. "You need to develop a plan so that you can continue to live in your present lifestyle but at the same time determine where you want your assets to go. If your kids don't need all of it, why not look at some options?"

We talked about her passions in life: the summer camp experiences, her love for the local congregation, her passion for mission, and her married son who was an overseas missionary.

She had a life insurance policy on herself which she wouldn't obviously need, so she designated The Presbyterian Church in Canada as the beneficiary. There was an entire portfolio of stocks and bonds which Harold had invested in over the years. She left them all to the local congregation ("I know they have building plans and this should help"). In her will she stated an amount to go to the presbytery-run camp and a theological college. She also took out an annuity with the Presbyterian Church so that she would receive a monthly income with the remainder of the annuity going to the church upon her death.

"That's planned giving", I said. "You have designated just how and where your assets will go; some if it right now and some of it after you're gone."

"To tell you the truth," she said, "I never gave this much thought before. I didn't really know that I was this well off. But now I have peace of mind."

This case study is fictional but it represents a discussion which could take place with any one of thousands of Presbyterians across the country.

Planned **Giving**

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Hilarious Giving

Life is full of paradoxes. We dine on jumbo shrimp, we refer to some malnourished people as living corpses and we hear occasionally of honest thieves who return their goods after stealing them. Here is another paradox: a stingy Christian. Perhaps it isn't a paradox at all; perhaps we even know one or two people who could be described as stingy Christians.

But the Bible never puts those two words together. When it comes to giving of offerings, scripture is chock full of references to giving generously or giving joyfully or giving a bounty. In fact, the Hebrew root word for 'joyful' is similar to the root word for 'hilarious'. Imagine being referred to as an "hilarious giver" within your congregation; one who literally jumps for joy, dances in the aisles, and laughs out loud when the offering plate is passed around. Try that on Sunday and you are bound to get more than a few glares!

Paul writes about generous giving in 2 Corinthians 9. It seems as though a congregation had promised to make a generous donation but they seemed in no hurry to come through with their promise. Paul sent them a letter, indicating that he was sending a few people on ahead to make the necessary arrangements to receive this gift "... so that it may be ready as a generous gift and not as one grudgingly given."

Sound familiar? We make a pledge to donate to a building program, or to Presbyterians Sharing... but then we become inclined to forget the pledge. When push comes to shove (and sometimes it seems as though it has to come to that), what was supposed to be a hilarious gift — given out of incredible joy — becomes a donation given out of obligation.

I once knew a cow like that. Most cows willingly wander into the barn, find their predestined stall, and munch on the feed while the farmer seeks a 'voluntary contribution' in the form of milk. One cow, however, deeply resented the notion of being corralled into the barn. She fought the farmer every step of the way, finally yielding to his authority in a corner of the barn when she couldn't move anywhere. She produced her pail of milk but she gave grudgingly.

Giving should not be seen as an obligation. It shouldn't come with strings attached. All that we have comes from the Lord: health, family, home, things, bank accounts, jobs, retirements. In fact, all that we have is the Lord's. When we set aside a portion to be returned to him and used within the church, we should do so in a celebrative fashion. 'Hilarious giving' doesn't sound too Presbyterian ... but it is biblical. Perhaps congregations should dare to experiment with the notion of hilarious giving. It may be a life-transforming experience.

It took a church presentation on planned giving

Dorothy Neal is a generic Presbyterian. She loves the church, grew up in it, and has been actively involved in the Women's Missionary Society for most of her life.

In fact, Dorothy remembers Church Union in 1925. Her mother was a scrutineer. And when the church building in Brigden near Sarnia ON was lost in Church Union, she remembers sitting on the steps of the church for the outdoors Sunday school lesson. ("We had no church building in which to worship so we met outside")

Dorothy served on the Board of World Mission and she also served at all executive levels within the WMS: presbyterial president, synodical and council executive. At 82, spry and fit, she is still the historian for presbyterial.

She trained as a nurse in Toronto and lived in Brigden until her children went to high school. Then she moved to Sarnia. Dorothy has fond memories of Kintail Camp where she worked as a nurse for many years. She also performed similar duties at the old Camp Goforth near Hamilton.

She first heard about planned giving when the denomination's planned giving officer, Hendy Andrews, made a presentation



at her church in the spring of 1998. "It seemed like a good idea," she says philosophically. Shortly afterward, Dorothy invited Hendy over for a chat.

She left a modest amount — $3,000 — in an annuity with one half going to the local congregation and the other half to Camp Kintail.

Dorothy feels good about the donation. "It's going where I want it to go."

She also said that it was good to hear an actual presentation on planned giving. "Sometimes you read about it in a magazine and you might think it's a good idea but you don't act until someone comes to your church and speaks about it."

What others say about the stewardship of assets

That is a wonderful term: the stewardship of assets. It is like a gardener tending the flower bed: nurturing the soil, picking off dead flowers, providing support when the plant grows too tall. How do you nurture and massage your assets? Probably by using some for daily expenses, giving some away for the work of the church, tucking some away as an investment. This is what others say:

"He gives only worthless gold who gives from a sense of duty."
– J.R.Lowell

"All in all, Planned Giving is a merging of the helping hand, the giving hand, and the receiving hand. It is both ministry and monetary in nature and really should not be valued solely on any one element."
- Frank Mayo, The Salvation Army

"Gain all you can, save all you can, give all you can."
- John Wesley

"Never measure your generosity by what you give, but rather by what you have left."
- Bishop Fulton Sheen

In stewardship, you don't begin with money. Rather, you begin with God, the source of all that we have.

"I must not just live my life. I will not just spend my life. I will invest my life."
– Helen Keller

When you need a plan, talk to Hendy



Hendy Andrews currently heads up the Planned Giving program for The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Hendy conducts seminars to teach congregations about planned giving through proper estate planning, providing them with resource materials and follow-up information. She works with individuals, enabling them to provide planned gifts for ministries that are important to them within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

She decided to get into estate planning after her husband died suddenly, leaving no estate plans in place. This experience left Hendy with a vision to help others. She studied estate planning and life insurance, receiving her insurance agent's license in 1986 from the Ontario Insurance Commission. She continued to study estate and financial planning while working for a major insurance company and in 1988 became the planned giving manager for the Canadian Bible Society. Under her guidance, this program grew to be a significant part of the Bible Society's fund-raising program.

Hendy was the first woman to serve on the executive staff of the Canadian Association on Charitable Gift Annuities and served on its executive until 1999. She is also a founding member of the Canadian Association of Gift Planners, serving on both the national and regional executives, and currently is the past chairperson of the London chapter of CAG.P.

Hendy Andrews was the first vice-chairperson of the London and Regional Leave a Legacy initiative and currently serves on the research committee. She is also a faculty member of Georgian College , teaching their planned giving program along with Dr. Edward Pearce.

Hendy is a well know speaker and mentor within the planned giving field.

"The amazing discovery so many of us are making is that when we break through the awkward silence and taboo about money, we are surprised by pure grace, joy, justice, freedom and gratitude. We come to understand why Jesus dealt with this subject second only to the Kingdom of God. Either God has us, including our money and possessions, and we are alive—or our 'things' (materialism, consumerism) have us and we are deeply wounded and in bondage, if not walking dead."
- Don MacClanen

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."
- Winston Churchill

"All you have shall some day be given; therefore, give now that the season of giving may be yours and not your inheritors."
- Kahlil Gibran

Planned Giving in a nutshell

Different ways to give



What are the different ways to give, and which ones are best for you? The choices you make depend largely on your personal lifestyle. The needs and resources of a young family will be dramatically different from those of a retired couple. Before making decisions about your own planned gifts, it is important to talk to a reputable financial planning professional to ensure you get the results you want. That person will walk you through the options and will provide you with a tailor-made plan for your financial situation. Here is a brief overview.

Wills

Wills allow you o make a contribution that comes out of your estate and does not affect your resources while you are living and still need them. There is a significant tax advantage for your heirs. And if you donate a gift of property such as a cottage, you still get to enjoy it as part of your lifestyle and your heirs will benefit from the tax advantage your gift earns through your estate. Wills, like all gifts, can be designated to the work of the church body that means the most to you: from your local congregation to denominational mission work in Canada and abroad.

Gift Annuities

Gift annuities allow you to make a financial gift now but still receive an income. A portion, if not all, of the income is tax free. In addition, tax laws allow older seniors a one-time tax receipt for a portion of the total gift. Your income is guaranteed for life and your income will remain constant.

Insurance

Insurance is an ideal financial vehicle for young people to leave as an affordable legacy. You can purchase a policy for a tax deductible premium of a few dollars each month until the policy is paid, and leave a significant bequest for the work of the church.

Older people who have an insurance policy in place can name the church as owner and beneficiary. You get a tax credit for any cash in the policy and a tax receipt for any premiums still being paid. A distinct advantage of donating money in an insurance policy is that it is not usually 'active money' so it doesn't take cash out of your everyday income.

Stocks, Bonds, Mutual Funds

In most cases, it is more prudent to donate the actual investment certificate rather than cashing it in and paying the capital gains tax. It can cut the tax liability by as much as half. Although the detail itself can vary and requires professional counsel, a donation of an investment can earn full value as a donation receipt. If you are one of many Canadians who has experienced a windfall because of demutualization of the insurance industry, the new stocks that you now own cold make a wonderful gift to help carry on the work of the church.

Gifts of Property

Donating property to the church will earn a tax receipt for the full appraised value which may save you the capital gains tax which you would have to pay if you cashed it in yourself.

Hendy Andrews
Planned Giving Officer
87 Myrtle St.
St. Thomas, ON
N5R 2E9
phone: (519) 631-3631 or 1-800-368-1371
fax: (519) 631-2759
email: hendyanddaryl@compuserve.com

Memories of Santa Tecla

by Olive Regina Anstice

How many of the people I saw bustling around the market-place lie hidden under the weight of mud?

Thirteen years ago at Christmas, I was in Santa Tecla. I was a short-term volunteer at an orphanage run by the Baptist Church in San Salvador. I wanted to give each of the children a small gift to celebrate Navidad. The director, Elvita, a knowledgeable and marvellous woman, offered to take me to Santa Tecla where there was a little store that sold home-made chocolates — a luxury much too expensive for any of the children, or the staff for that matter, to have tasted. So we went together, and I bought sufficient chocolates to give each child and staff member several candies together with an orange tied up in pretty paper with a ribbon.

The store was fascinating. Not only because of the abundance of chocolates but because of the joy of the owners as they took me behind the main room to see, all decked out for Christmas, a shrine to the Virgin Mary. With my more austere Reformed background, the shrine was not particularly appealing to me. Yet, I was struck by the faith of the proprietors as they lived out their lives in what was, then, an appalling situation made unpredictable and terrible by the enduring civil war.

Subsequently, I went to Santa Tecla several times. The daily market that stretched down the main street fascinated me. There, local people bought supplies for only that day. In the heat and without refrigeration, nothing lasted long. It was not a poor town by El Salvadoran standards. There were proper sidewalks in places and everything seemed well-organized. By the luxurious standards we take for granted, however, it was simple, with few amenities. Nevertheless, it was a town with character, and I sensed a certain pride of place.



Photos courtesy of Action by Churches Together

The recent earthquake buried the main street of Santa Tecla. I wonder if the chocolate store (if it was still in business) survived? How many of the people I saw all those years ago bustling around the market-place lie hidden under the weight of mud? How can the surviving inhabitants, who have come through so much, summon the will to begin again?

I first became interested in El Salvador when, together with a friend, we raised $5,000 to help rebuild after the earthquake that preceded the civil war. I saw how even that small amount brought hope to the homeless.

We receive many requests for help. But, in comparison with the vast majority of people in God's world, we are wealthy. Saint Paul exhorted us in Galatians 6:9: "So let us not grow weary in doing what is right ... whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all ... " R

Readers may assist quake victims in El Salvador and India through gifts to Presbyterian World Service and Development.

Olive Anstice is a member of Rosedale Church in Toronto.

Paul Alkazraji

Sanctions:
a price too high?

Sanctions against Iraq have caused suffering on a colossal scale to ordinary people

Ten years ago at the end of February, after the Allied forces chased the remnants of Saddam Hussein's troops out of Kuwait, the Gulf War came to an end. As the sands of Desert Storm settled, the United Nations Security Council's economic sanctions and the embargo preventing Iraq from selling its oil were then tightened into position. Was the UN's policy meant to deliver a short, sharp aftershock to the Iraqi regime for its actions? Or was it to inflict such economic hardship on the country that the people would rise up to overthrow their leadership? Was it to diminish the country to contain it? Or was it to lever it into disclosing the whereabouts of its so-named "weapons of mass destruction"? Whatever the real aims of the policy, sanctions are still in place a decade later. Only the United States and Britain at the UN are insisting they be enforced.

Throughout those years, alarm has grown about the effects of those sanctions on the ordinary people of Iraq. Frozen economic development has reduced all but the élite to a scrimping existence. People strip their homes to sell off anything in the *souk* (market-place) to make ends meet. Water and sanitation systems have remained badly damaged since the war, leaving people with no alternative but to use contaminated water. When mothers mix this water with powdered milk, their children contract diarrhoea. Combined with malnutrition, this is a main cause for a doubling of the country's infant mortality rate.

Journalists have reported the emergence of a condition doctors call "sugar babies": mothers, too malnourished to breast-feed and unable to afford milk powder, feed their infants sugared water or tea, causing their babies to become severely malnourished and bloated. The charity Medical Aid to Iraq has reported alarming increases in rickets and leukaemia in children as well as malnutrition. Hospitals, once matching the best in the West, now suffer from chronic shortages of diagnostic equipment and pharmaceuticals, some of which have been vetoed by the sanctions committee. Angina tablets are blockaded as they contain minute quantities of nitro-glycerine and, the theory goes, they could have a "dual use." Scarce treatments that are available are way beyond the financial reach of most.

The blockade is killing an Iraqi child every six minutes

Salaries are currently pitiful, with teachers earning the equivalent of about $6 US per month. As a consequence, according to UNICEF, more than half a million children have died due to embargo-related causes since 1991. Some commentators double this figure. It is difficult to estimate the impact on other vulnerable groups. Sanctions on Iraq have caused suffering on a colossal scale, and the UN's oil-for-aid program appears to have brought insubstantial relief.

Critics of the sanctions policy have come from many corners. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey-Clark has described it as "the most draconian blockade in modern history." This blockade, according to Denis Halliday, former assistant secretary general of the UN, is killing an Iraqi child every six minutes. Even Scott Ritter, the former weapons inspector in Iraq with the United Nations Special Commission on Monitoring the elimination of weapons of mass destruction (UNSCOM), has denounced the embargo as being immoral. Three years ago, a World Council of Churches delegation reported that sanctions had accomplished "little else but suffering for the ordinary people" and "substantially impaired" Christian witness in the country. Before Christmas, bishops in the Church of England voted overwhelmingly to express their concern for the Iraqi people with a recommendation to the British government that questions whether any further political advantage can be gained from the existing sanctions policy without worsening the humanitarian crisis. "Sanctions have failed to achieve their purpose," they noted.

After a long decade for the Iraqi people, Saddam Hussein's regime is stronger than ever, and those who live under it are caught between a rock and a hard place. Since UNSCOM left in 1998, weapons have not been inspected and the sanctions are now beginning to break down. Whatever the true motives behind the policy, has it brought about the change required? Isn't the price paid by ordinary Iraqis already way too high? Surely the time has come for us to raise our voices to challenge those who insist there is no other way. R

Paul Alkazraji is a journalist living in Bath, England, and author of the book *Heart of a Hooligan*.

A new beginning

The afternoon of February 10, 2001, was, at first glance, a typical Saturday afternoon at Knox Church, Toronto. Bright winter sunlight was streaming through the stained glass panels in the hall. The sounds of someone practising the organ could be heard in the background. Delightful odours were drifting from a nearby kitchen.

But it was far from a typical Saturday at the distinguished old church — it was the first day of the third annual Presbyterian African Heritage celebration. The brilliance of the stained glass was met by the colourful clothing of many of the participants. The organ played second fiddle to the drums of the Umoja Learning Circle. And the enticing smells from the kitchen were definitely not those of macaroni and cheese or scalloped potatoes.

The theme for the weekend, "A New Beginning: Proclaim Jubilee," drew its inspiration from Ezekiel 34:11-16: "For thus says the Lord God, 'I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out ... I will feed them with justice.'"

In her opening remarks, plenary leader Rev. Paulette Brown, minister of University Church, Toronto, pondered the question, "How can African Canadians speak of Jubilee?" To proclaim Jubilee, they must first locate their own experiences within the diversity of the African Canadian experience, she suggested. "The problem with the Jubilee text [Leviticus 25:39-46] from my location," Brown told the participants, "is that it prohibits the community from enslaving members of the community, but allows for the enslavement of those who are outside the community. African Canadians, whose historical experiences include the holocaust of slavery, must apply critical thinking to the Leviticus text for it to truly proclaim Jubilee for them." They must appreciate the struggle of the Leviticus community in trying to build a just society based on their understanding of God while, at the same time, pushing against the narrow-minded world-view of the Leviticus writers.

The remainder of the day was set aside to help participants locate their experiences. Workshops covered a variety of topics such as "Connecting the Stories: Aboriginal and African Canadian," "The Bible and Jubilee" and "Experiencing the Sabbath Rest." Obvious care was taken to include the "less experienced," with workshops on "Truth and Forgiveness" for young adults and young teens. For the children, there was "Jubilee Story-Telling" with Aita Sadoo, a warm and energetic story-teller who both enchanted and edified her audience with lessons in self-esteem, such as the tale of "The eagle who thought he was a chicken." The afternoon finished with a time for "feedback, reflections and evaluation."

Like Saturday's workshops, Sunday afternoon's worship service also brought a few changes to Knox Church, this time to the large and vaulted sanctuary. Yes, the flags were still in place, and, yes, the prelude was being played on the magnificent pipe organ; but, off to one side, there was a swirl of activity and colour as the Ghanaian Band and Ghanaian Choir set up in the corner. Suddenly, the organ was joined by a saxophone, a soulful saxophone that wove its way in and out of the prelude and, occasionally, soared above it. It was the first indication that music would play a major part in bringing the African Canadian experience to the congregation, whether it was the beautiful simplicity of the Angolan Choir and the Ghanaian Choir or the infectious exuberance of Sharon Riley and the Faith Chorale Gospel Choir.

The guest speaker, Rev. Dr. Ella F. Busby, organizing pastor and evangelist of New Harvest Presbyterian Church, Florence, South Carolina, introduced herself good-naturedly by saying, "Some of you may be wondering what a beautiful woman like this is doing with such a rough voice." Calling it a gift from God, she then swung into a sermon that, had her voice not been rough at the beginning, certainly would have left it that way at the end. With the verve of a revivalist preacher, Busby told the congregation that *every* month is Black History Month. She reminded them that they are descended from kings and queens from great lands. "Jubilee is restoration. Jubilee is what goes around, comes around," she said. Like a shepherd tending his sheep, "Someone is always watching over us."

Following the sermon, Communion was celebrated. When the close to three-hour service ended, the congregation recessed to those words so familiar to Canadian Presbyterians: "Si-ya-hamb' e-ku-kha-nyen'kwen-khos'" — We are marching in the light of the Lord. (*Tom Dickey*)

Event hopes to capture spirit of Canada Youth 2000

"Rejoice 2001 — A celebration of Youth in the Spirit of Canada Youth 2000" will be held Sunday, May 6, at the Sean O'Sullivan Theatre at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario. The evening, which will consist of a gathering time from 5 to 7 p.m. and a worship service from 7 to 9 p.m., will be youth oriented but child friendly. Adults are also welcome. There is no registration required for the event. However, wristbands will be handed out and the theatre will be filled on a first come, first serve basis.

briefly noted

Mission staff arrivals: *Pauline Brown,* from India, March 26; *Denise Van Wissen,* from Nicaragua, April (date undetermined).

National staff appointments: *Colleen Smith,* synod youth consultant, Synod of Toronto and Kingston.

Deaths: *Beatrice Scott,* overseas worker in the Bhopal Diocese of India for many years, died March 1.

Green thumb award: *Pat Martin,* for producing the first green tomato in the church offices tomato growing contest. (The other contestants are trying to ketchup.)

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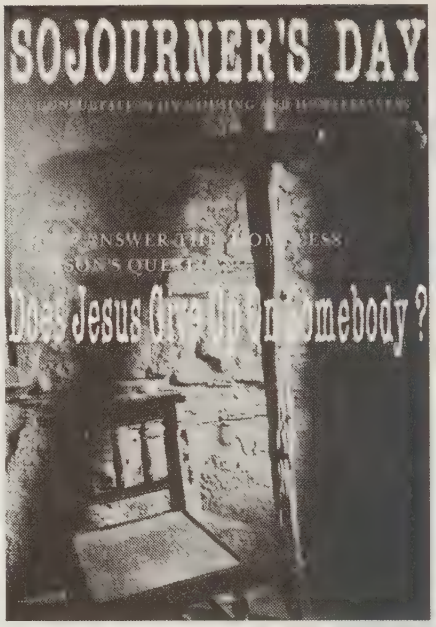
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Sojourner's Day



Thirty-two people, made up equally of clergy and laity, spent the morning of Saturday, February 10, bringing their experience and commitment to bear on the problems of housing and homelessness at "Sojourner's Day: A Consultation on Housing and Homelessness" held by the Presbytery of East Toronto at St. Andrew's Church.

Lori Ransom, an elder at St. Andrew's and a member of the presbytery's task group on housing and homelessness, served as the facilitator. Lynda Katsuno of the Canadian Churches Forum led a worship service that used word, music and the lighting of candles to convey its message. In his opening address, Rodger Hunter spoke powerfully of the potential for both blessing and risk in ministry with the homeless, stating several times that there can be no "sanitized" ministry with the homeless, whether in the area of health, housing, pastoral visitation or advocacy. Stewart Gillan led a Bible study that emphasized a commitment to community and a pooling of resources.

The participants then broke up into groups to look at housing and homelessness from four viewpoints: Boarding Homes Ministries, with Rodger Hunter; Evangel Hall and Portland Place, with David Smith; Habitat for Humanity, with Cathy Finlay; and Advocacy, with Stuart Coles. An evaluation of the consultation and a look at the next steps to be taken closed the event.

Convocation time

Knox College

The 157th convocation of Knox College, Toronto, will be held at Convocation Hall, University of Toronto, on Wednesday, May 16, at 8 p.m. The convocation speaker will be Dr. J. Philip Newell, scholar in spirituality at St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, and author of several books on Celtic spirituality. The degree of Doctor of Divinity (*honoris causa*) will be conferred upon: Rev. Ian G. MacLeod of Baddeck, Nova Scotia, who has served in the Presbytery of Cape Breton for the past 38 years; Rev. Fred Rennie, minister of St. John's Church, Cornwall, Ontario, for the past 25 years; and Rev. Chris Vais, minister of Knox Church, Waterdown, Ontario, until contracting ALS, and publisher of the newsletter *For Words*.

The Prebyterian College

The 134th convocation of The Presbyterian College, Montreal, will be held at The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul on Thursday, May 10, at 8 p.m. The guest speaker will be Dr. Diogenes Allen, Stuart Professor of Philosophy, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey. The degree of Doctor of Divinity (*honoris causa*) will be conferred upon: Rev. Glen H. Davis, co-minister of Knox Church, Agincourt, Ontario, and Moderator of the 126th General Assembly; and Danford E. DeSilva of Westminster Church, Montreal, currently vice-chair of the Joint Board of Theological Colleges.

Vancouver School of Theology

The 30th convocation of Vancouver School of Theology will be held at Shaughnessy Heights United Church, Vancouver, on Sunday, May 6, at 4 p.m. The guest speaker will be Rev. Dr. William J. Phillips, principal of VST.

Principal clerk expresses concerns and appreciation for *Dominus Jesus*

Following his attendance at a recent meeting of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), Stephen Kendall, principal clerk of General Assembly, wrote a letter to Rev. Gerald Wiesner, president of the CCCB, expressing his gratitude for the invitation. "Commitment to ecumenical partnership is indeed very strong within the conference, and I can assure you that our commitment to such partnership is, and always will be, deep," Kendall wrote.

Kendall went on to say that it was in the spirit of ecumenical co-operation that he wished to raise some questions about the recent publication of the Vatican document *Dominus Jesus*. The nub of the questions is related to the chapter called "Unicity and Unity of the Church" and, in particular, to the paragraph that states "ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate … are not Churches in the proper sense."

"It will come as no surprise," Kendall told the bishops, "that the Reformed family of churches have always thought of themselves as one branch of the Body of Christ and, therefore, fully churches of Jesus."

Kendall also said that a close reading of the entire document reveals "many areas of concern in which we would find common understanding." "We appreciate that this document calls the faithful to reaffirm certain indispensable elements of Christian doctrine in the wake of various relativistic theories that are seeking to justify religious pluralism even within the Christian Church," he said. "The articulation of this problem, and the strong position taken on God's salvific and unique revelation in Jesus Christ are … music to The Presbyterian Church in Canada's ears!"

Editor's Note: A case of misread handwriting led the *Record* to identify Rev. Paul Lam as Paul Lan in the photo on page 32 of the March issue. The *Record* apologizes for the error.

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Ministry Director

Yonge Street Mission is a Christian humanitarian organization bringing God's peace, dignity and justice to those living in need in Toronto's inner city. Our Evergreen Centre for Street Youth provides ministry programs and basic services to street-involved youth in Downtown Toronto, including food, health care, drop-in services, employment assistance, counselling and referrals. Reporting to the Associate Executive Director, the Ministry Director is responsible for the overall operations and management of the Ministry Centre and is a member of the "ministry leadership team" of the Mission.

As this position has been reposted, we encourage applicants who have not yet applied.

Please send your résumé and cover letter to:
David Adcock,
Yonge Street Mission,
270 Gerrard St. East,
Toronto, ON M5A 2G4
Fax: (416) 929-7204;
E-mail: executive@ysm.on.ca
We regret that only those applicants to be interviewed will be contacted.

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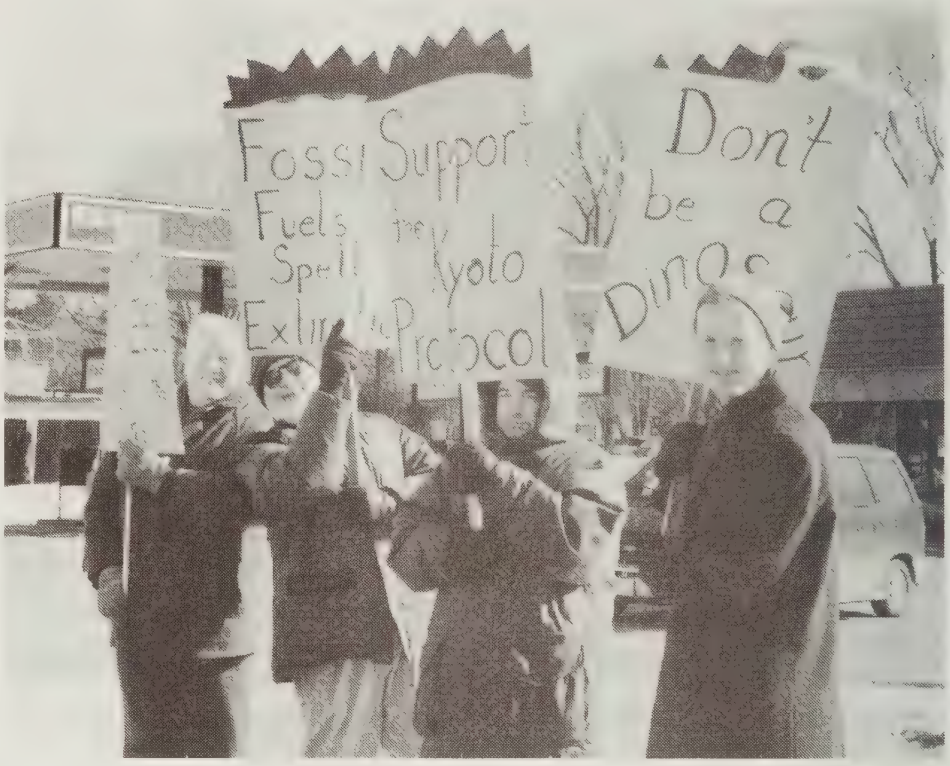
General Assembly news and photo coverage

Lively topics on PCCTalk

Wrestling a dinosaur in Burlington

Many scientists today believe dinosaurs became extinct because of climate change. Ten Days for Global Justice, an ecumenical church coalition, recently set out to make a major oil company's opinion extinct. Twenty-four picketers in front of a Burlington, Ontario, Esso station handed out postcards to be sent to Imperial Oil Limited and to the federal and Ontario governments.

Imperial Oil advised the federal government against ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement signed in 1997 by 160 countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in an effort to slow down global warming. Among the two dozen picketers were four Burlington ministers (L to R): Rev. Clive Simpson of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church; Rev. Harold Wells, a professor at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto; Rev. Peter Hoyle of Appleby United Church; and Rev. Bruce Dickson of East Plains United Church.



CELEBRATE WITH KNOX COLLEGE
May 14 - 16

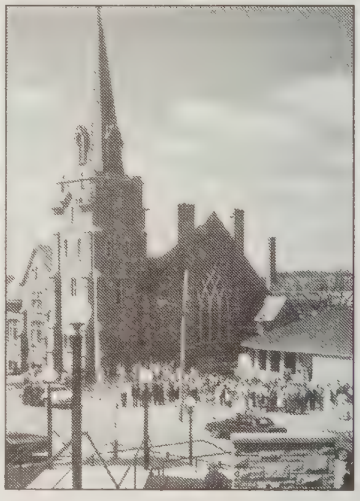
Saturday, May 12 – Wednesday, May 16
Exhibition and Sale of Watercolours by Carol Westcott, former member of the Knox Board of Governors
Monday, May 14 – Wednesday, May 16
Displays throughout the College
Caven Library, McKay Resource Room, Book Room
Monday, May 14
3:30 & 4:15 Tours of the College
8:00 Free lecture by Philip Newell
"Listening for the Heartbeat of God: A Celtic Spirituality"
Tuesday, May 15
Workshop with Philip Newell
(pre-registration required)
Wednesday, May 16
3:30 Faculty Presentation
Lay Education – Prof. Nam Soon Song
Distance Education – Prof. Bradley McLean
8:00 157th CONVOCATION
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Soundwaves reach churches during East Coast Music Awards

When the East Coast Music Awards (ECMA) were held February 11 in Charlottetown, examples of the wide range of wonderful music the awards celebrate could be heard in local churches. A pilot project this year called "Soundwaves" took the music out into the community. Michael Caveney, minister of St. James Church, Charlottetown, served as the interface between the ECMA and the churches. Pictured with St. James organist Frances McBurnie and choir director Frank Nicholson are recording artists Jennifer and Ardyth (Jennifer Wyatt and Ardyth Robinson). They performed two songs at St. James ("Prayer" and "Winds of God"), blending their voices and harps in a spirited and moving way.

Radical changes proposed for Church of Scotland services

Plans to introduce revolutionary changes to the Church of Scotland have been broadly welcomed by senior members of its own flock, according to an article in the *Glasgow Herald*. The most radical changes in 150 years include proposals to scrap Sunday morning services as well as traditional hymns, prayers and sermons. The replacement of congregations with a looser concept of "communities of faith" and meetings held away from the "bricks and mortar" of the church building are among proposals included in a report commissioned by the Kirk following last year's General Assembly. A redefining of the role of the Moderator, to extend the post beyond one year and allow individuals to have more impact, is also recommended.

Rev. Peter Neilson, author of *Church Without Walls* — a report for the Special Commission on Review and Reform — told the *Sunday Herald*: "We are talking about turning the church upside-down. It is an overly centralized church." There is little doubt there will be considerable opposition when the report is submitted for debate and a vote at the General Assembly in May.

Ron Ferguson, minister of St. Magnus Cathedral in Orkney and former leader of the Iona Community, said the Church of Scotland still enjoys a great deal of respect and affection among many people who are searching for a spiritual dimension. However, Ferguson, a columnist with the *Herald*, also stated the Kirk is in need of a "radical reformation" if it is to serve a new generation.

"What we don't need in our worship are more mindless choruses and liturgies that have all the grace and beauty of a Department of Social Security pamphlet on winter heating allowances," Ferguson said. "The challenge is to combine the best of our past with the highest quality work of contemporary writers, musicians and theologians."

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Mainline Evangelicals share renewing experience

Renewal groups in Canada's Anglican, Presbyterian and United churches took a first step toward working together when they held a joint conference on November 4 in Burlington, Ontario. More than 300 people came to hear speakers Dale Lang and Gary Walsh and to attend workshops on topics such as vibrant worship, prayer, and the theology of Marcus Borg, among others. Dale Lang, minister of St. Theodore's Anglican Church in Taber, Alberta, became known to Canadians across the country for his strong testimony of faith when his son, Jason, was murdered in April 1999. Gary Walsh is president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

Calvin Brown, director of The Renewal Fellowship Within The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the primary organizer of the conference, called the event "the beginning of a real co-ordinated movement of renewal across the country."

Though the renewal groups share many concerns, they formulated no agenda at the conference. Brown says there will be more conferences, and the organizing committee will explore other ways to work together. "We had hoped to, and I think we succeeded in, seeing God's calling to work together and to share in that hope. We want to build on that."

In fact, two more gatherings are already being planned, one for November of this year and one for 2002. (Source: *Faith Today*)

news scan

KCCJ hosts conference on Korean reunification

The Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ) invited representatives from several churches in Korea and Japan, and four representatives from the Korean Christian Federation in North Korea to a conference held December 12-14 in Fukuoka. In his address to the conference, Kan Young Sup, chair of the Korean Christian Federation, expressed gratitude for the food and material resources that have been shared with famine-stricken North Korea by churches from around the world. Kan believes the peaceful reunification of North and South Korea will restore the Korean people's rightful relationship as one nation under God and is, therefore, God's will. (*Kyodan Newsletter*)

Political clout

Presbyterians in the U.S. Congress increased by two members to a total of 49 (32 Republicans, 17 Democrats), according to the latest tally by Americans for Religious Liberty. Of the 535 members of the 107th Congress, 150 are Roman Catholics, 72 are Baptists and 65 are Methodists. Following Presbyterians and rounding out the top 10 are Episcopalians (41), Jews (37), non-denominational Protestants (29), Lutherans (20), Mormons (15) and United Church of Christ (8). (Source: *Presbyterian Outlook*)

And he'd have a ponytail and tattoos

If Samson were alive today, he'd be seeing a psychiatrist, say U.S. therapists. The biblical strongman is the earliest recorded case of a well-known mental illness called antisocial personality disorder (ASPD), according to a team led by Eric Altschuler of the University of California at San Diego. The evidence? Samson was a brawler who once killed 1,000 Philistines without showing any remorse, the *New Scientist* reports. He also burned Philistine fields, showing classic ASPD impulsiveness and inability to conform to social norms. As a child, he set things on fire, tortured animals, and was a thief and a bully. People suffering from ASPD exhibit at least three of seven behaviours, such as being impulsive, reckless and routinely getting into fights. (Source: *Globe and Mail*)

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Ted Siverns

The curious case of the zealous bounty hunter

Saint Paul's dramatic introduction to Jesus

Acts 9:1-20

The city has changed but not all that much in the years since Paul of Tarsus (also known as Saul) made his way to Damascus from Jerusalem. Though larger and more modern now, Damascus has retained much of what Paul saw in the first century. Syrians call their city Damasq el Sham, the City of Shem (son of Noah). It is a city that has been inhabited for 6,000 and, possibly, as many as 8,000 years.

Why did Paul go to Damascus? What happened to him? And was he successful?

Approaching Damascus from the coastal highway, you travel beside the Barada ("Cold") River tumbling down from the Anti-Lebanon Mountains. Soon you reach the summit of Mt. Kassioun with Damascus below. The city is on the edge of the desert and, though the winds can blow hot and dusty, the temperature is moderate for the most part. Damascus was walled in Paul's time and the old city is still three-quarters surrounded by rampart walls.

I've had the opportunity of walking part of the road that Paul walked as he made his way to Damascus. And I have wondered about Paul and his most unusual Damascus experience.

It was about the year 34 when Paul journeyed to Damascus. He came to the city as a scholar, a traveller, a leader, a theologian and an artisan. He came as one of the Jewish Diaspora. He who knew the traditions of the Hebrews and the Greeks. He came as a proud Pharisee and Roman citizen. He came, as described in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, as a man who was short, bald, with crooked legs, eyebrows that met and a hooked nose. He came with a "thorn in the flesh," the meaning of which is left to our imagination.

Paul travelled with a letter from the high priest to the synagogues of Damascus, authorizing Paul to capture those who belonged to "The Way." These disciples of Jesus were to be bound and conveyed as prisoners to Jerusalem. Was this legal? Probably not, but the Roman police system was not universally effective especially for non-Roman citizens. It was so lax that, with his intense distaste for the people later known as Christians, Paul would attract little attention while deputized as a bounty hunter.

Shortly before arriving in Damascus, an unforgettable event occurred that changed Paul from a zealous bounty hunter to a man with a mission from God. It happened somewhere not far from where I walked. Whatever it was, this "light from heaven" was so bright it blinded Paul. Nevertheless, it wasn't what was seen but what was heard that disturbed Paul: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

Those with him saw nothing but heard a voice that directed Paul to proceed to the city and await instructions. Paul did not describe this event as a conversion (God for him was still God!) but as a revelation (Galatians 1:16) and an appearance (I Corinthians 15:8). Whatever this unique experience is called, it initially gave him three days of blindness and confusion that prepared him for "big time" change.

Whatever it was, this "light from heaven" was so bright it blinded Paul. Nevertheless, it wasn't what was seen but what was heard that disturbed Paul: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

In the meantime, at the house of a man called Ananias (a place you can still visit in Damascus), Ananias was called to go to Straight Street (now the Arabic Darb el-Mostakim) to the house of a man named Judas. Mark Twain, aware of the way Damascus streets twist and turn, thought "straight" must be ironic. In the house of Judas, Ananias would find Paul.



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He was instructed to lay his hands on Paul to cure him of his blindness.

Aware of Paul's bounty-hunting reputation, Ananias was, first, incredulous, then, sceptical and, finally, submissive and obedient to the Voice. Paul regained his sight, was baptized and — the timing is not clear — began his ministry. We do not have an account of Paul among the Christians of Damascus. We do know the Jewish community was not happy with him. One night, in a house that backed onto the city wall, the window was opened and Paul escaped — lowered in a basket outside the wall. That house is also present in Damascus, as the many Christians in Damascus will tell you.

Was he successful? Was the journey worthwhile? Paul was introduced in a dramatic way to Jesus! "The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophecy?" (Amos 3:8). R

For discussion and reflection

- Is there any significance to Paul's *three* days of blindness and confusion?
- Who and what is the "me" Paul persecuted?
- Three times in the Acts of the Apostles, Luke, the writer, hearkens back to that scene on the Damascus Road. Compare Acts 9:1-22; 22:4-16; 26:9-18 and Paul's words in Galatians 1:13-17.
- Would Paul (and could you?) identify with Jeremiah 20:7-9?

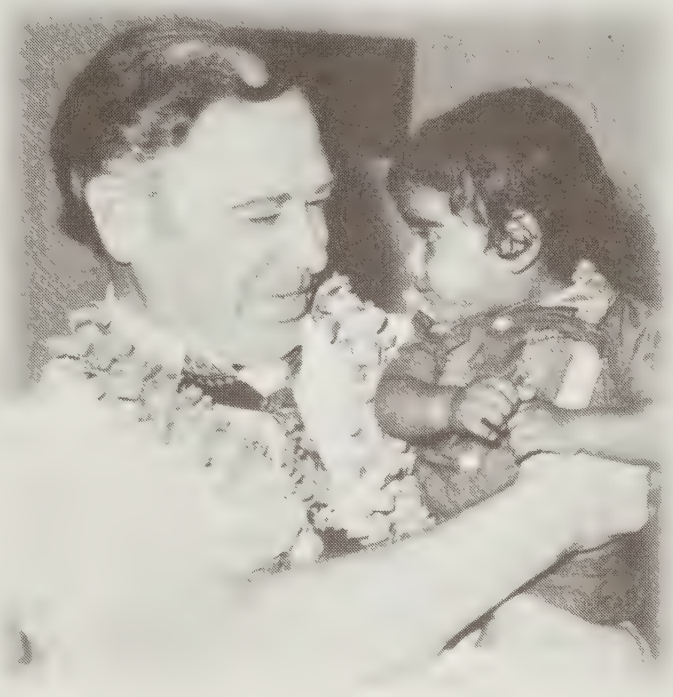
L.E. (Ted) Siverns is the minister of First Church in New Westminster, B.C.

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Gwyneth Whilsmith

Frank Whilsmith:
advocate for the world's poor and suffering

When Frank retired from the Christian Children's Fund of Canada, he set up his own small charitable fund, The Whilsmith Love-Life Foundation



My brother-in-law Frank Whilsmith was an urban, cosmopolitan man. He brimmed over with enthusiasm about his work, his hobbies, his family, his friends and, especially, about God and all God's people — particularly children. Frank loved them all, regardless of colour, race or creed. He was always "Busy, busy, busy" with many projects and events. His hectic schedule left us breathless.

Frank was born on the east side of Toronto in 1914. The few houses on the street were surrounded by farmlands and bounded by the Don Valley where he and his friends roamed at will, swam in the "old swimming hole" and built forts in the dense forest. His love of nature never left him. When he graduated from Danforth Technical School's art program, he took a position in the commercial art department of the Robert Simpson department store. He became art director at the age of 22.

When the Second World War broke out, he joined the Royal Canadian Navy. He served in the submarine patrol in Halifax and as a fighter direction officer overseas.

Soon after the war ended, he opened the Frank Whilsmith Advertising Agency. His rare skills for organization and business brought almost instant success with many national and international high profile accounts. However, in 1960, he gave up the advertising business and applied his energies to founding the Christian Children's Fund of Canada, an organization that promotes sponsorship of children all over the world. As executive director, he travelled widely in Third World countries, seeking out impoverished children. He was at home wherever he put down his hat, be it sleeping on a mud floor in a hut in Africa or being entertained at the Canadian Embassy.

Back home, he spoke to hundreds of churches, clubs and individuals, urging them to help provide food, clothing, housing and education for these children. The response of his listeners, many of whom signed up as sponsors, thrilled him.

Frank's favourite Scripture was the story of Jesus blessing the children. For many years, all his correspondence included the first verse of Jemima Luke's hymn:

I think, when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How he called little children as lambs to his fold,
I should like to have been with them then.
I wish that his hands had been placed on my head,
That his arm had been thrown around me;
And that I might have seen his kind look when he said,
"Let the little ones come unto me."

Christian Children's Fund took up much of his time, but not all of it. Once, when in India, he visited the Dr. Graham Homes, a live-in school for deprived Anglo-Indian children in West Bengal, a place he revisited many times. Until he died, he remained an ardent supporter and director of the Canadian council

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for Dr. Graham Homes and sponsored several children who lived there.

Children in other countries were his concern, too — in Portugal, Mexico and Costa Rica, to name a few. He often cajoled his friends into work groups to build schools and feeding stations for children in poor countries. Korea was also dear to his heart. For his longtime associations in that country, Korea awarded him the Order of Diplomatic Service Merit Chang-Eui Medal, the highest honour that country gives to a foreigner.

Frank always needed to be where the action was, especially if it led to a deeper commitment to God

He was a director or member of several Christian organizations at home and abroad, including: The Scott Mission in Toronto, The Latin American Mission (Canada) and Ja Junta de Opdec (Costa Rica). For more than 50 years, he was also a director of Houghton College, a Christian college in Upper New York State.

Frank always needed to be where the action was, especially if it led to a deeper commitment to God. He helped bring the prayer breakfast movement to Ontario, a forum in which government leaders come together in prayer for God's guidance in the governing of the country. He assisted the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa in setting up the rescue and sponsorship program of the Vietnamese Boat People. Twenty years later, he struck up a conversation with a young Canadian Vietnamese man in downtown Toronto whose parents had been Boat People. When the young man heard of Frank's involvement, he exclaimed: "You wait here. I'm going to get my car and drive you home. It's the least I can do!"

Although ecumenical in outlook, Frank strongly supported The Presbyterian Church in Canada. He was an elder and trustee of Willowdale Church in Toronto. During his prime, he helped organize Presbyterian Men. He served as chair of the Administrative Council, was convener of the *Presbyterian Record* Committee and was a member of several other national committees, including the Ewart College campaign.

When Frank retired from Christian Children's Fund of Canada in 1983, he set up his own small charitable fund, The Whilsmith Love-Life Foundation. Through it, he and his board of directors assisted people in the Third World who could not qualify for help from larger charitable organizations. Love-Life funded hundreds of small projects, including a sewing machine for a technical school in Nigeria, oxygen concentrators for a hospital in Uganda, special shoes for a crippled woman in Sri Lanka, houses for people with leprosy in India.

He also took up his keen interest in Canada's heritage, especially of his beloved Toronto. He organized numerous field trips and conducted many of them. In 1997, Mel Lastman, the then mayor of North York, presented him with the Volunteer Award of Excellence for his work with the Historical Society.

Frank was an active member of the Seniors Writing Group at Ryerson Polytechnic University (Toronto), contributing articles about his travels and adventures around the world to Ryerson's magazine. He gave unstintingly of his time to several senior citizens groups, speaking at many special events.

Frank Whilsmith died September 30, 2000, leaving Dora, his wife of 62 years, and five sons, Donald, Graham, Gregory, Grant and Glenn. Two young daughters, Linda and Marilyn, predeceased him. Although he loved life in all its many aspects, he was not afraid of death. He said many times that the life to come would be even more exciting than this one! R

Gwyneth Whilsmith is a member of Knox Church in Bayfield, Ont., and author of several books: *Blessings (A Little Book of Graces), I Know God's in Here Somewhere, A Basket of Stones: Symbols of Hope and Faith* and *Hear the Pennies Dropping.*


R. Sheldon MacKenzie

A man in a boxcar!

To die as we live — with trust in God

One Sunday morning, an Air Force chaplain spoke of the wonder and the power of prayer. Most of what he said is long since forgotten, with the exception of a story he told to illustrate the blessing of the habit of prayer.

It seems some men were unloading a boxcar of rubber tires — enormous rubber tires for use on transport planes at the airbase. During the unloading, one of the huge tires rolled back down the ramp and crushed a man against the end of the boxcar. When the chaplain and the ambulance arrived on the scene, they were told the accident victim was dying. As the chaplain bent over him to say prayers with him, he heard these whispered words: "Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep."

The man dying in the boxcar was repeating from memory the first prayer he had learned as a child. About to die, he spoke to God using the same words he had used as a child when he was about to go to sleep.

At the time of Jesus, when boys and girls were being put to bed, they were taught to say, "Into your hands I commit my spirit." When the time came for him to die, far away from his childhood and its routines, Jesus used the same words he had repeated often when the time had come for him to go to bed and there to sleep. "Father," he said, "into your hands I commend my spirit."

The words of this brief prayer of a Jewish child come from Psalm 31. On the lips of Jesus, they are particularly appropriate. It seems Psalm 31 was written by a person who lived the greater part of his life in pain. As he grew older, in addition to the pain, there were threats to his life from cruel enemies who slandered and reviled him. In his despair and pain and fear, he fled to the presence of God for protection and for deliverance from all his enemies. In the presence of God, he affirmed his faith in divine protection and cast aside his fear of death itself. He was confident God would arrange his escape from it.

About to die, the man dying in the boxcar spoke to God using the same words he had used as a child when he was about to go to sleep

The psalm was originally, then, the expression of one person's spiritual pilgrimage. And when other people read it, it seemed to be an expression of their experiences as well. And so, like many of the great hymns of the church, one person's experience became a regular part of public worship.

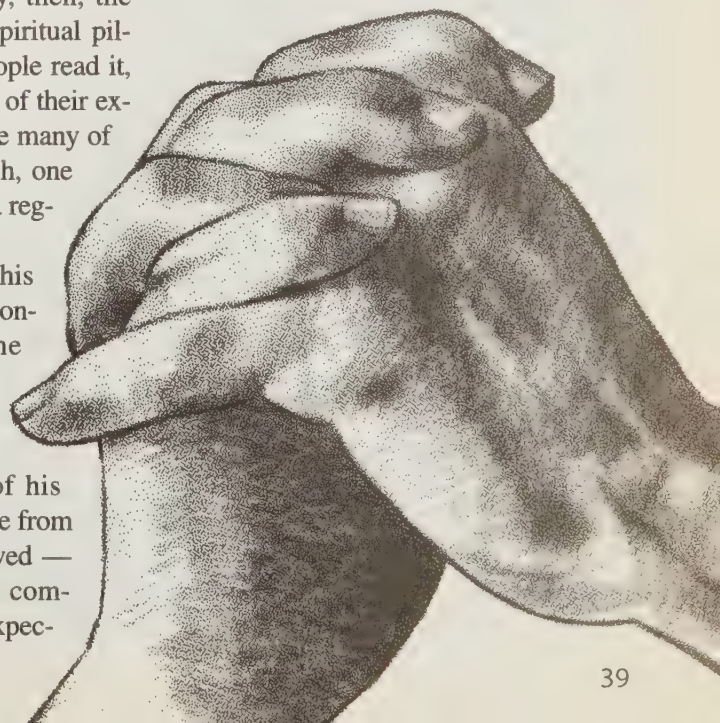
The psalmist committed his life to God. He did so in the confidence that, as a result, he would escape from death. By contrast, Jesus committed his dying to God as naturally as he had done all of his living. He did so, not to escape from death but to die as he had lived — with his trust in God. Jesus committed his dying to God in expectation of life after death. He was confident that what he had taught others he would shortly experience himself.

The man dying in the Canadian boxcar said: "Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep." That was as far as he got. But the prayer goes on to say, "If I should die before I wake, I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take."

The man dying on a cruel cross on Golgotha said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." And that, according to Luke, was as far as he got. But the prayer goes on to say, "For you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God."

We, too, commit ourselves to God, knowing we have been "ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven." R

R. Sheldon MacKenzie, who now lives in New Glasgow, N.S., is a retired professor from Memorial University in St. John's, Nfld., and a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.



A SENIORS RECOGNITION SERVICE was held at St. Andrew's Church, South Lancaster, Ont., as part of the congregation's millennium celebrations last year. Honoured members and adherents were presented with certificates, burning bush pins and corsages. A special cake was served during the coffee time after the service.

(*Note:* This photo was mistakenly identified as St. John's Church, Cornwall, in the March *Record*. The *Record* apologizes for the error.)





REV. ROBERT SANDFORD holds the plaque presented to him by the congregation of St. Andrew's Church, Kilmaurs, Ont., on the occasion of his retirement from active ministry at the church. He and his wife, Elizabeth, faithfully ministered at Kilmaurs every summer (April to November) from 1984 until July 23, 2000.

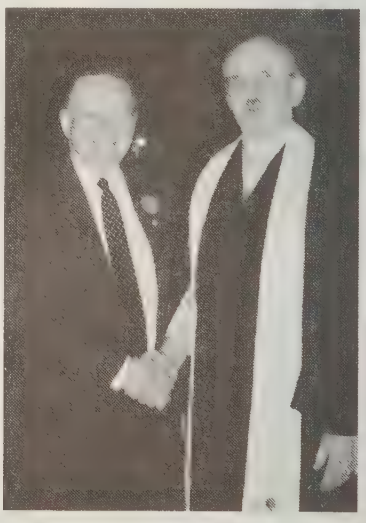


THE CONGREGATION OF Forbes Church, Grande Prairie, Alta., organized a collection of shoebox gifts for Operation Christmas Child, filling 71 boxes for children in need around the world.



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL of St. James Church, Forest, Ont., set a goal of collecting 2,000 pennies for Contact House, the local food bank. Instead, they collected 9,650 pennies. Shown with the children and their rolls of pennies are (L to R): Bill Boere, chairperson of Contact House; Rev. Dennis Carrothers; teachers Tracy Rogers, Mary-Ann Campbell, Sheri Flater and Lisanne Hendrick; and superintendent Carol MacKinlay.

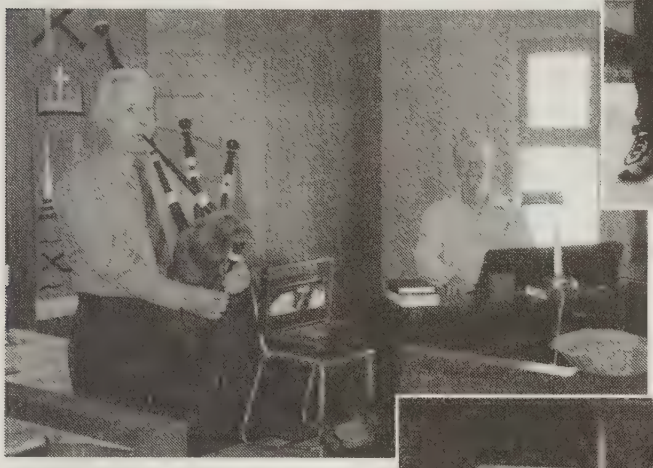
CLERK OF SESSION Murray Nicoll of Calvin Church, Halifax, presents a preaching stole to Rev. Angus Roy MacDonald, minister of the Disciples of Christ Church, West Gore, N.S., and guest speaker at Calvin's anniversary service last year.



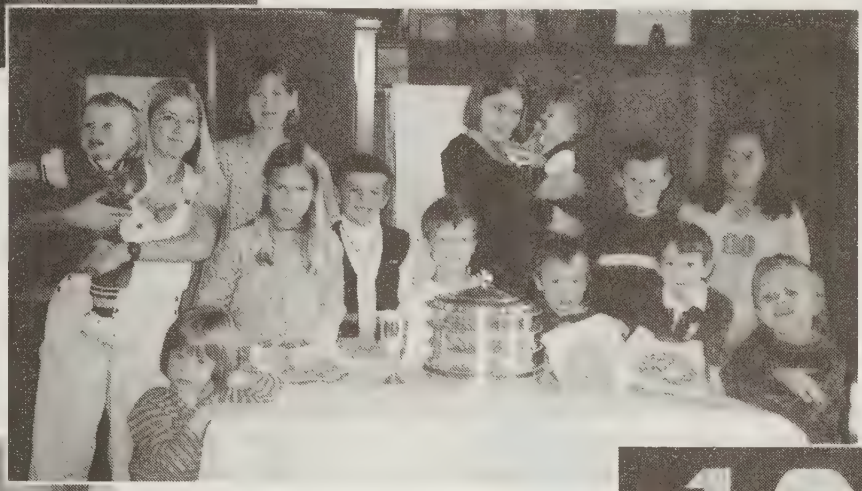
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A JOYFUL NOISE, the children's choir of Knox Church, Acton, Ont., took its ministry of music on the road and visited two seniors residences one Sunday afternoon. Pictured in front of Eden House are (L to R): (front) Travis Pink, Jessica Watson, Justine McIntyre, Brittany Hansen, Colin Brennan and Katie Brennan; (back) Matthew Watson, Maja Vermeulen, Lauren Vermeulen, Meghan Evans, Katherine Watson and Nicole Shears.



FIFTEEN MEMBERS OF St. Columba Church, Parksville, B.C., travelled by sea and through mountain passes to reach the Cariboo region of British Columbia. There, in the little chapel at Lac La Hache, they took part in the dedication of an organ donated by Neil Duncan, organist at St. Columba. Neil is seen accompanying St. Columba piper John Reid.



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN of St. Paul's Church, Thornbury, Ont., along with Rev. Frances Savill, display the flatbread they made and brought to the Communion table on Worldwide Communion Sunday, Oct. 1.

CAVEN CHURCH, Bolton, Ont., celebrated its 125th anniversary last November with a visit from the Moderator of the 126th General Assembly, Rev. Glen Davis. He is pictured (left) with Caven's minister, Rev. Jeremy Lowther, and some of the youth group. The cake was made and decorated by Darlene Beckstead, a recent newcomer to the church.





THE 100TH BIRTHDAY of Rev. Michael Fesenko, who retired in 1976 as minister of the former Ukrainian Presbyterian Church, Toronto, was celebrated on Dec. 1 at Knox Church, Toronto. About 100 people attended the party given by Michael's daughters, Eleanor Carpen (left) and Rhoda Melinyshyn (right). Standing behind them are Rev. J. Kevin Livingston (left), senior minister of Knox, and Rev. Glen Davis, Moderator of the 126th General Assembly.



AT THE CANADIAN SOCIETY of Presbyterian History annual meeting in Toronto, Sept. 30, the prize for best congregational history in 2000, presented by the General Assembly Committee on History, was awarded to Clarkson Road Church, Mississauga, Ont., for *Fulfilling the Dream: A History for the Millennium, 1957-2000*. The award was presented to organizer Gordon Coyne, pictured with Rev. John Johnston (left), president of the history society, and Rev. Mel Bailey (right), past-president.

The Sunday school children and teachers of First Church, Thunder Bay, Ont., had fun preparing and wrapping 43 shoeboxes filled with gifts for Operation Christmas Child. The boxes were part of the church school's "Mission Outreach — Kids Helping Kids" project.



A COMMUNITY ECUMENICAL Vacation Bible School is held every summer at Knox Church, Magnetawan, Ont. More than 60 children, from age three to 14, attended the "Outback Expedition" in 2000. Shown are the children preparing to sing their "outback songs" at the closing program.



AN AVERAGE ATTENDANCE OF 35-40 children and teachers made "The Great Bible Land Dig" Vacation Bible School a busy place at West River Church, Durham, N.S. An added benefit of the school is that, each year, it donates any offering collected to a different project. This time, it was the Camp Geddie "Campership" Fund.



THE CONGREGATION OF St. Luke's-Knox Church, Finch, Ont., honoured Eleanore MacLean by celebrating not only her 80th birthday, but also her faithful and untiring service to the church. Eleanore was the first woman elder elected in the congregation and served as president of the WMS. She also enjoyed many years as a member of the choir.



A FORMER CHILD OF THE MANSE joined the congregation of First Church, Brandon, Man., in celebrating its 75th anniversary when Rev. David Jones of First Church, Brockville, Ont., was the guest speaker on Oct. 29. His father, Rev. James Peter Jones, was minister of the congregation from 1964-1973. With David (right) is the current minister, Rev. Dale Woods.



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN of Nassagaweya Church, Nassagaweya, Ont., presented their families with their booklet *My Church School Family*. The millennium project included each child's picture and a brief biography, as well as a history of the Sunday school.

MEMBERS OF Paterson Memorial Church, Sarnia, Ont., joined members of Harrison United Methodist Church, Harrison, Tenn., to take part in "Project Crossroads" in Marion, Va., deep in the Appalachian Mountains. Started 20 years ago by the minister of Harrison United Methodist, the program brings young people and adults together for a week of repairing homes in the area.

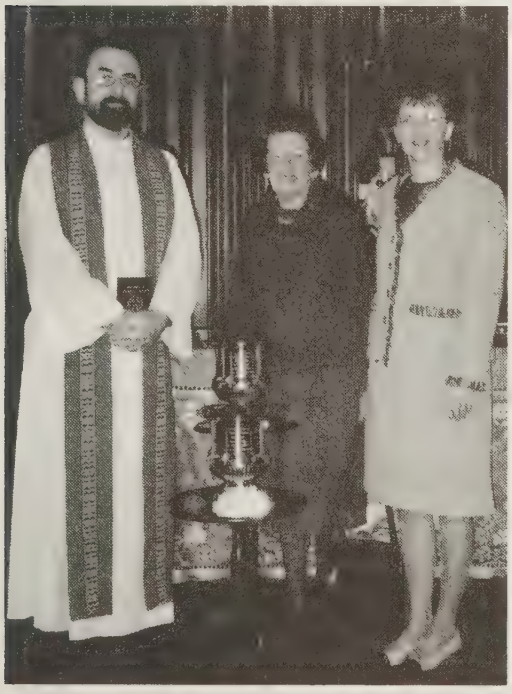


THE PRESBYTERY OF KAMLOOPS honoured Rev. Lorna Hillian (pictured front row, third from left) on her retirement at a recent meeting held in Cache Creek, B.C.



LAST FALL, 150 friends of the Presbytery of Calgary-MacLeod celebrated the beginning of its newest church extension project in the north-west of Calgary. A 4.2-metre Celtic cross was raised on the building site to claim the land and the future for Christ. The new church is called Anam+chara, Gaelic for "soul friend."





KATHLEEN STEWART (centre) and her daughter, Dr. Moira Stewart Freeman, join Rev. Laurence DeWolfe, minister of the Church of Saint David, Halifax, in admiring two brass flower holders presented to the church in memory of Kathleen's husband, Dr. Chester B. Stewart.



CHILDREN, LEADERS, VOLUNTEERS AND PARENTS gather for song and dance at the closing ceremony of the Vacation Bible School held at Erskine Church, Hamilton, Ont. More than 60 children attended the school to learn about King David through art, drama and mission outreach.

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Wanted — youth worker with an active church background and a clear understanding of the Christian faith who has ability/experience in working with youth in a church community. Skills in music and/or drama an asset. This position will have flexible hours with a minimum of 15 hours per week. Please reply to:
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Orillia Presbyterian Church
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will celebrate their 150th Anniversary in 2001

Events are being planned for the entire year.
Anniversary Dinner — Sat., May 26th
Anniversary Church Service —
Sun., May 27th – 10:30 a.m.
Contact Helen Macdonald for tickets or information.
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On Sunday May 6, 2001
Knox Presbyterian Church
Leamington, ON

will be celebrating its 125th Anniversary with special guest, **The Rev. Glen Davis**, Moderator of the 126th General Assembly.

We invite all former members and friends of the congregation to join us for worship at 11:00 a.m. and a fellowship luncheon.
Knox Presbyterian Church
58 Erie St. S.
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125th Anniversary

you were asking?


Tony Plomp

No longer a life term for elders

question: *Are congregations free to decide if they will have term elders, or are all Presbyterian elders obliged to serve a life term?*

There used to be a time when elders in The Presbyterian Church in Canada were obliged to serve a life term (without parole, nor with a "faint hope clause"!). The motto was, "Ordained for life, serving for life."

All that changed some General Assemblies ago when the church decided to allow those sessions that desired to have term service for elders to institute this at their own initiative but in consultation with the congregation and upon approval of presbytery. Under this new permissive legislation, a person called to the eldership will be ordained to that ministry for life but will serve only a six-year term. This term, however, is renewable when the six years are up. In some sense, then, a person could still serve many, many years, perhaps even "for life," if the congregation continues calling the individual to serve and he or she is willing to do so.

The "consultation with the congregation" has apparently posed somewhat of a problem as this new system takes hold. Under church law, the session is not subject to the will of the congregation, not even in this matter. My understanding is that the congregation would be informed of the proposed change and any responses duly noted and respectfully considered.

---

question: *What is the Presbyterian Church doing to bring about an integrated school system (Roman Catholic and Protestant) in the province of Ontario?*

You are asking the wrong person because I live in British Columbia. Here, the public school system is fully funded by taxpayers, and independent (often religious) schools, including the Roman Catholic school system, are partially funded at 50 per cent per student, capital costs excluded. I believe this to be a fair compromise.

I do not know what the situation is in Ontario except that, apparently, there is no government funding for any private or independent schools except for the historically endowed Roman Catholic system.

I do not think any recent General Assembly has addressed this concern of yours. In a recent Forum within the pages of this magazine, the matter was addressed with both sides of the argument given an opportunity to state their views.

Personally, I wish all people of whatever faith well as they seek public funding for the development of schools where their children may be taught according to a provincial curriculum but also within the ambience of their faith convictions. It seems to be a logical and fair extension of our professed celebration of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. R

Please send questions for Rev. Tony Plomp to tony_plomp@telus.net or 4020 Lancelot Dr., Richmond, B.C. V7C 4S3.

Film

Chocolat *directed by Lasse Hallström, starring Johnny Depp and Juliette Binoche (Alliance Atlantis). Reviewed by Edward McNulty.*

Although Lasse Hallström's film has been marketed (in the United States at least) as an erotic love story, it is not. It is more like *Babette's Feast* in that it affirms the spiritual and the sensual are more closely related than some in the church realize.

Juliette Binoche is Vianne, a mysterious figure driven by the North Wind to a French village ruled over by the mayor, Comte De Reynaud (Alfred Molina), the moralistic pillar of church and community. Vianne is the single mother of young Anouk (Victoire Thivisol). She rents a store from the ill-tempered Armande Voizin (Judi Dench), and mother and daughter set about painting and fixing it up for their chocolate shop.

Led by the Comte, the villagers are a bit scandalized that Vianne plans to open such a shop during Lent, a season when most people give up sweets. The Comte is also offended that Vianne refuses his invitation to attend Mass. He fans the suspicions of everyone and predicts her shop is bound to fail. He does not realize how persuasive Vianne's hospitable nature is, nor, even more, how seductive her chocolates can be.

One neglected wife feeds her boorish husband a certain bag of chocolates (Vianne has a magical way of matching a particular form of chocolate with each customer). That night, she enjoys the best session of conjugal bliss since her wedding day. Not only is she back for more chocolates, so is her husband. Others are also drawn and won over, including Armande and her young grandson, whom her overly organized daughter had prevented her from seeing because the daughter regards her mother as being too Bohemian and, thus, a bad influence. An abused wife, Josephine (Lena Olin), finds refuge with Vianne, becoming transformed as she serves as her assistant. Vianne also befriends the head of a flotilla of wanderers dubbed The River Rats by the villagers, who organize a campaign to drive them away. In the process, Vianne becomes the champion of the squatters and romantically involved with their leader, Roux (Johnny Depp). But when the hostility of the villagers breaks out into near tragedy, Vianne loses heart and decides to leave. Will those whom she has helped liberate be able to liberate her?

If you liked *The Spitfire Grill*, you should like this story, whose heroine is also like the Wounded Healer that theologian Henri Nouwen described in his book. And if you enjoyed *Babette's Feast*, you



Juliette Binoche in Lasse Hallström's *Chocolat*.

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should *love* this tale that celebrates both the sensual and the spiritual sides of human nature. There is a wonderful Easter sermon in which the young priest, having put aside the influence of the Comte, asserts that Christians must define themselves not by what they refuse to do, but by what they embrace and whom they include. The narrator calls the story a fable; I'd prefer to call it a parable, a parable of loving hospitality and tolerance.

Edward McNulty, minister of Bovina Presbyterian Church in New York State, produces *Visual Parables*, a monthly review of films, videos and the arts.

Books

To the Ends of the Earth: A History of the Canadian Bible Society *by Gerald E. Benson with Kenneth G. McMillan (Canadian Bible Society, 1998, $10). Reviewed by L. Glennys Stewart.*

This up-to-date history of the Canadian Bible Society is written by Kenneth G. McMillan, a minister of our church who served for 26 years as Canadian Bible Society general secretary. Quotes from those who were involved with the society, material from publications, selections from letters and photos enliven each of the 26 chapters.

Since several Canadian districts (or auxiliaries) have histories older than the Bible Society itself, an overview of that work is presented in a summary dating from the work of Moravian missionaries to Labrador in 1810. A Prince Edward Island auxiliary was organized in 1837 and the Saskatchewan districts in 1922.

One especially interesting chapter deals with Scripture translations, language problems and the accuracy of translated words from the original Hebrew and Greek. Notes provide information on individual native languages such as Cree, Dogrib, Inuktitut, Naskapi and Micmac.

The growth and spread of the work of the Bible Society is covered by geographical areas of Canada, in other countries and through national societies. Outstanding contributions, the work of women in the auxiliaries, various methods of raising money for Scripture translations and the work of significant individuals are thoroughly covered. Stories of people whose lives changed completely because of access to a Bible are included.

Rev. E. J. B. Salter, a pioneer in Bible Society work on the Prairies, vividly describes the hardships of winning the West in 1908. He describes sleeping in a sod hut, temperatures of –58 F, tent churches to hold 100 people, encounters with lynx and bobcats — all part of the hardships endured to promote the early work of the Bible Society.

This book provides a thorough understanding of the Bible Society — its birth, its early work, how it has met ongoing challenges, and how it will face the future translation, production and distribution of the Bible. Short summaries of the work and accomplishments of each of the general secretaries from 1905 to 1997 are also included.

This is a history full of factual information yet interspersed with personal contributions and human interest stories.

L. Glennys Stewart is a retired teacher and clerk of session of Duff's Church in Puslinch, Ont.

Most books reviewed may be purchased through The Book Room, 50 Wynford Dr., North York, Ont. M3C 1J7. Prices include shipping and handling but not GST. Do not send payment with order. An invoice will follow. Please include name and location of congregation. Toll-free order line: 1-800-619-7301, ext. 301, e-mail: bookroom@presbyterian.ca.

Open Letter

Should these be the last of our days,
As the Jeremiah that I passed on the street
Would have me know (drab jacket, vacant tooth,
The wild locust net

Of hair, eyes clamouring for mercy:
Walking off, an accident broke in the wake
Of his path, and he dissolved into the construction's
Yellow oblivion),

And though it has been treacherous
(Two thousand years of tunnel at the end
Of the light, love sometimes only the water's drop
Over the rocks ahead),

I would you knew that this short time
On Earth that sounded the span of a finch's trill,
Translucent space of joy that held us both,
Was sound enough for me.

— Jason Gray

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transitions

DEATHS

DOKA, REV. KALMAN C., passed into the presence of our Lord on Wednesday, January 17, 2001, at Evergreen Nursing Home in White Rock, B.C.

Kal was born in Kipling, Saskatchewan, on April 17, 1917, the son of pioneers Kalman and Lydia Doka. He finished 12 years of school in Kipling and Regina and then attended Regina Normal School. He taught in rural Saskatchewan for six years. He then attended McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, graduating with a BA degree. This was followed by three years study at Knox College, Toronto, and he was ordained a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1950.

During his ministry, he served churches in Welland, Brantford and Mt. Pleasant, Ontario; Kipling, Saskatchewan; Abbotsford, B.C.; and Calgary. It was in Abbotsford that he pastored a bilingual congregation and, being fluent in the Hungarian language, he was of great assistance to the refugees of the 1956 Hungarian revolution. He continued his ministry in Calgary and, after five years, accepted the position of superintendent of missions in the Synod of Alberta and Northern Saskatchewan. Seven years later, he served in this capacity in the Synod of British Columbia until his retirement in 1985. His work had taken him over thousands of miles by car and air. In 1972, Knox College honoured him by granting him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

White Rock had been his home since 1975. He leaves to mourn: Molly, his devoted and loving wife of over 60 years; sons David (Margaret) of Surrey, B.C.; Brian (Wendy) of South Surrey, B.C.; three daughters: Mary Ann (John) Rosberg of Kelowna, B.C.; Margaret (Nick) Kooman of Red Deer, Alberta; Elizabeth (Rob) Savage of Cochrane, Alberta; 11 grandchildren and three great-grandsons; brother Emil (Helen) Doka of Kipling, Saskatchewan; sister Dorothy (Bill) Fabian of Burlington, Ontario; and sister-in-law Dolores Doka of Kipling, Saskatchewan. He will also be missed by two aunts, numerous cousins, nieces, nephews and many friends. He was predeceased by his parents and a brother, Raymond. Kal will be lovingly remembered for his deep faith and his concern and love for people.

SMITH, REV. LESLIE GORDON, passed away on February 4, 2001.

Leslie Gordon Smith was born March 8, 1916, in Goderich, Ontario, and was the youngest of four brothers and two sisters. His family was originally from Enfield, Middlesex, England. He was the son of a newspaper man and spent his early years in Ogema, Saskatchewan, and Vancouver.

Les married Frances Johnson on May 12, 1942, and they had one daughter, Karen Louise. He worked as a linotype operator and then served 28 years in the Royal Canadian Air Force, attaining the rank of Flight Lieutenant.

Following his retirement from the Air Force, Les felt the call to ministry and attended The Presbyterian College, Montreal, from which he graduated in 1969. During his student years, he served the pastoral charge of Vernon, Ontario. Upon his graduation from The Presbyterian College, The Rev. Leslie G. Smith served as associate minister, Knox Church, Ottawa. He was minister of St. Andrew's, Hamilton, Bermuda, from 1970 to 1981.

Following retirement. Les served the congregations of St. Paul's, Winchester; Knox, Mountain; and St. Andrew's, South Mountain, Ontario. He also served in chaplaincy at the National Defence Medical Centre during this time. Les Smith was active in the congregations of St. Timothy's, and St. David and St. Martin in Ottawa following retirement.

CUMMING, MARILYN, 46, faithful member, teacher and worker of Knox, Burgoyne, Ont., and of God, passed away after a courageous battle with cancer on March 5, 2000. Marilyn is tremendously missed by her husband, Dean; children, Chris, Keri, Matt; parents, Joyce and Murray Thede, and her extended family.

DENSTEDT, MARY, 87, of Burns Presbyterian Church, Milverton, Ont., died suddenly in Listowel Hospital, Jan. 19, 2001. She was active in all areas of the church and was a dedicated choir member for over 60 years. Will be greatly missed by all.

ELGIE, MYRTLE, 90, lifetime member of Knox Presbyterian Church, Grand Valley, Ont., Jan. 17, 2001.

INNES, FLORENCE (BURNS), 88 years, died Nov. 26, 2000. Devoted member of Knox Presbyterian Church, Harrington, Ont. WMS honorary life member, longtime Sunday school (nursery) teacher, organized untold numbers of church dinners. We are grateful for her contributions to her church and community.

McCANNEL, VERA, 72, treasured member, Knox, Burgoyne, Ont., lifetime member of WMS, passed away after a courageous battle with cancer, Sept. 17; joined by husband, NEIL, in God's peace on Nov. 23. Sadly missed by daughters Anne, Mary, Betty and families, and her church family

MUIR, ED, 75, a man of great energy and humour, whose love for St. Andrew's, Thorold, Ont., was expressed in numerous "hands-on" ways. He befriended everyone and left many with a desire to continue his vision of a caring and friendly church, Aug. 14, 2000.

NICHOLSON, W. GARNER, 82, longtime member, elder, clerk of session for 30 years, Knox, Belgrave, Ont., Feb. 1.

ROBINSON, HAROLD STANLEY, of Glamis, Ont., son of the late William Robinson and Kathleen Young. Died at Kincardine Hospital, Ont., Oct. 26, 2000, in his 79th year. He was a lifelong member of St. Paul's Church, Glamis; member of board of managers and longtime Sunday school superintendent. Survived by sister Wilma Johnson of Listowel; brother Ken Robinson, RR 1, Kincardine; and niece Julie, nephews Dale and Mark. Harold is sadly missed in Glamis community.

SHOBRIDGE, MARILYN (ROE), 61, passed away on Jan. 30, 2001, after a battle with cancer. Marilyn always devoted herself to the life and work of the Presbyterian Church. Wife of Rev. L. Paul Shobridge of West St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines, Ont., and First Presbyterian Church in St. Davids. Daughter of the late Rev. James S. Roe and Mary-Evelyn Roe.

THOMPSON, JACK, 86, a longtime faithful member and an elder for 54 years at First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

WEYLIE, JOHN, 73, faithful member of St. Andrew's, Streetsville, later Knox Presbyterian Church, Grand Valley, Ont., Jan. 25, 2001.

INDUCTIONS and RECOGNITIONS

DeWolfe, Rev. Janet (stated supply minister), St. Matthew's, Elmsdale, and Hardwood Lands, N.S., Feb. 2.

Martin, Rev. Dr. Brice L., St. Andrew's, Arthur; St. Andrew's, Gordonville, Ont., Feb. 25.

The Transitions column welcomes announcements of special events such as births, marriages, anniversaries, graduations, baptisms and the reception of new members, as well as death notices. The rate is $1 per word or $50 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.
All notices of pulpit vacancies, recognitions, ordinations and inductions will be charged to the congregation: $10 for the basic notice and $1 per word for additional information. (There will be no charge to congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.)
Contact the *Record* office regarding all items for the Transitions column.

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Hanwell, N.B., St. James. Rev. Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1M2; 506-455-8220; sapc@nbnet.nb.ca.

Merigomish, N.S., St. Paul's; French River. Rev. Charles McPherson, Box 132, Stellarton, N.S. B0K 1S0.

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Montreal, Robert Campbell Taiwanese (half-time English/Taiwanese bilingual assistant). Rev. Harry Kuntz, 92 Rockwyn Ave., Pointe Claire, Que. H9R 1W2.

Mount Royal, a suburb of Montreal (part time). Rev. Peter Szabo, 7110 de l'Epee, Montreal, Que. H3N 2E1.

Nepean, Ont., Parkwood (effective July 1, 2001). Rev. J.H.W. Statham, 1220 Old Tenth Line Rd., Orleans, Ont. K1E 3W7.

Ottawa, Westminster. Rev. Alex Mitchell, 2400 Alta Vista Dr., Ottawa, Ont. K1H 7N1.

Pierrefonds, Que., Westminster (part time). Mr. Elias Saikaly, 4373 Elgin, Pierrefonds, Que. H9H 1T9; e_saikaly@hotmail.com.

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Etobicoke, Mimico. Rev. Susanne Rescorl, 680 Annette St., Toronto, Ont. M6S 2C8; 416-767-2689; fax 416-767-1229.

Fenelon Falls, St. Andrew's; Knox, Glenarm. Rev. Doug Scott, RR 1, 22 Hillview Dr., Bobcaygeon, Ont. K0M 1A0.

Fergus, St. Andrew's. Rev. Linda Bell, 2 Cross St., Elmira, Ont. N3B 2S4; drbell@execulink.com.

Guelph, St. Andrew's. Rev. William Johnston, 54 Queen St. N, Kitchener, Ont. N2H 2H2.

Maple, St. Andrew's. Rev. Bryn MacPhail, Box 164, 19 Stewart St., Beeton, Ont. L0G 1A0; 905-729-0055; bmacphal@netrover.com.

Markham, Chapel Place. Rev. George Beals, 10058 Yonge St., Richmond Hill, Ont. L4C 1T8. Potential candidates must have an intimate knowledge of Middle Eastern culture and be thoroughly fluent in Arabic and English.

Nobleton, St. Paul's. Rev. Sam Priestley, 143 Main St. N, Markham, Ont. L3P 1Y2.

Orillia, Orillia (St. Andrew's), (effective Sept./Oct. 2001). Rev. Donald McKillican, 99 Peter St. N, Orillia, Ont. L3V 4Z3.

Oshawa, Knox. Rev. Lois Whitwell, The Search Committee, 147 Simcoe St. N, Oshawa, Ont. L1J 4S6; gorddi@durham.net.

Port Carling, Knox; Torrance, Zion. Rev. Michael Barnes, 45 McMurray St., Bracebridge, Ont. P1L 2A1; 705-645-4521.

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Toronto, Patterson. Rev. Gordon Fish, 15 Lambeth Rd., Toronto, Ont. M9A 2Y6.

Toronto, St. Giles Kingsway. Rev. John Borthwick, 2314 Islington Ave., Toronto, Ont. M9W 5W9; 416-741-1530; barley.is@home.com.

Toronto, Trinity York Mills. Rev. John Congram, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, Ont. M3C 1J7; jcongram@presbyterian.ca.

Toronto, Westminster. Rev. Nicholas Athanasiadis, 670 Eglinton Ave. E, Toronto, Ont. M4G 2K4; nathans@idirect.ca.

Tweed, St. Andrew's. Rev. A.D. MacLeod, 16 Marmora St., Trenton, Ont. K8V 2H5.

Unionville, Unionville Church. Rev. Robert Smith, 271 Centre St., Thornhill, Ont. L4J 1G5; tpchurch@aims.on.ca.

Uptergrove, Knox; East Oro, Essen; Jarratt, Willis. Rev. Tim Purvis, Box 26, Stayner, Ont. L0M 1S0; seraph@sympatico.ca.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Appin, Appin Church; Melbourne, Guthrie. Rev. Brian Nichol, RR 1, Dutton, Ont. N0L 1J0; 519-762-3724; revrev@webgate.net.

Beechwood, St. Andrew's; Centre Road, Knox; Kerwood, West Adelaide. Rev. Kristine O'Brien, 152 Albert St., Strathroy, Ont. N7G 1V5; kristine@golden.net.

Listowel, Knox. Rev. Nicholas Vandermey, Box 663, Seaforth, Ont. N0K 1W0.

London, Elmwood Avenue. Rev. Andrew Human, 55 Hincks St., St. Thomas, Ont. N5R 3N9; revhuman@execulink.com.

London, St. Lawrence. Rev. Donald McInnis, 280 Oxford St. E, London, Ont. N6A 1V4.

Milverton, Burns; North Mornington. Search Committee, 66 Main St. N, Milverton, Ont. N0K 1M0.

Monkton, Knox; Cranbrook, Knox. Rev. Peter Bush, Box 235, Mitchell, Ont. N0K 1N0; 519-348-9080; knoxmit@quadro.net.

Petrolia, St. Andrew's; Dawn, Knox. Rev. Philip Wilson, PO Box 1381, Corunna, Ont. N0N 1G0.

Point Edward, Point Edward Church (part time). Rev. James Sloan, 268 Dantiki Ct., Corunna, Ont. N0N 1G0.

Priceville, St. Andrew's (half-time). Rev. Scott Sinclair, 865 Second Ave. W, Owen Sound, Ont. N4K 4M6.

Stratford, Knox. Rev. Rick Horst, PO Box 247, St. Marys, Ont. N4X 1B1.

Thamesville, St. James; Duart. Rev. Jack Neil, Box 1148, Ridgetown, Ont. N0P 2C0; 519-674-3487.

Windsor, Chinese (Cantonese-speaking, part time). Rev. Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9E 1Z5.

Windsor, Minister to begin a new outreach project near the University of Windsor. Rev. Hugh Appèl, Convener, Knox Presbyterian Church, 251 Duncan at Wellington, Wallaceburg, Ont. N8A 5G5; knox@kent.net.

Windsor, Riverside. Rev. Jeff Loach, 405 Victoria Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9A 4N1; loach@jet2.net.

Wyoming, St. Andrew's; Camlachie, Knox. Rev. Raymond Hodgson, 261 N. Christina St., Sarnia, Ont. N7T 5V4; 519-332-2662; raymond.hodgson@sympatico.ca.

Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

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204-476-5387; gmander@escape.ca.

Flin Flon, Man., St. Andrew's (full-time ordained minister with interest in developing a centre for rural and remote ministries). Rev. Dale Woods, 339-12th St., Brandon, Man. R7A 4M3; phone 204-727-5874; fax 204-728-7037; fpc@escape.ca.

Fort Frances, Ont., St. Andrew's (half-time at present). Rev. Bert Vancook, 207 South Brodie St., Thunder Bay, Ont. P7E 1C1.

Kenora, Ont., First. Rev. Beth M. McCutcheon, 1476 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Man. R3G 0W3.

Thunder Bay, Ont., Calvin. Rev. Mark McLennan, 635 Grey St., Thunder Bay, Ont. P7E 2E4; markmac@lakehead.net.

Winnipeg, St. Andrew's-Calvin (joint charge seeking full-time minister). Rev. John Hogerwaard, 341 Eveline St. at McLean Ave., Selkirk, Man. R1A 1M9; 204-482-6425.

Synod of Saskatchewan

Swift Current, St. Andrew's (part time). Rev. Andrew Apack Song, Box 1295, Moose Jaw, Sask. S6H 4P9; apackson@home.com.

Yorkton, Knox; Dunleath. Rev. Deborah Lannon, 2170 Albert St., Regina, Sask. S4P 2T9; dalfor@dlcwest.com.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Calgary, Centennial. Rev. David Vincent, 1102-23 Ave. NW, Calgary, Alta. T2M 1T7; Fax 403-220-9003; dvincent@nucleus.com.

Calgary, St. Andrew's (co-minister, special responsibilities for youth, young adults, pastoral care). Rev. Kirk Summers, 290 Edgepark Blvd. NW, Calgary, Alta. T3A 4H4; 403-241-1443; ksummers@cadvision.com.

Calgary, Varsity Acres (co-minister). Rev. Dianne Ollerenshaw, 344 Coach Ridge Rise SW, Calgary, Alta. T3H 1G1; ollerend@cadvision.com; Web site: www.cadvision.com/vapc.

Medicine Hat, Riverside. Rev. Fiona Wilkinson, Box 566, Bassano, Alta. T0J 0B0; fax 403-641-4091; fiona@eidnet.org.

North Peace Territorial Ministry. Rev. Shirley Cochrane, PO Box 37, Wanham, Alta. T0H 3P0; 780-694-2185; scochran@telusplanet.net.

Synod of British Columbia

Burnaby, Gordon. Rev. Guy Sinclair, 2597 Bourquin Cres. E, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1Y6.

Castlegar, Grace. Rev. Doug Johns, Box 255, Creston, B.C. V0B 1G0; johnsy@kootenay.com.

New Westminster, Knox. Rev. Dr. J.H. (Hans) Kouwenberg, 2597 Bourquin Cres. E, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1Y6; calvinpresb@telus.net.

Vancouver, Central. Rev. Bruce McAndless-Davis, 1320 7th Ave., New Westminster, B.C. V3M 2K1; 604-526-4914; fax 604-543-7597; bruce@staidans.bc.ca.

Victoria, St Andrew's (senior minister). Rev. Brian Crosby, 2770 Murray Dr., Victoria, B.C. V9A 2S5; phone/fax 250-361-9396; brian_crosby@telus.net.

classifieds

CO-ORDINATOR OF FAMILY MINISTRIES — We desire an enthusiastic, faithful person to build and supervise innovative, creative programs for young families. Thirty-five-hour week, contract position. For job description/forwarding a résumé, contact immediately: Joan Ireland (519-621-6828), Search Committee, Knox's Galt Presbyterian Church, 96 Henry Street, Cambridge, Ontario N1R 3W9.

ELMVALE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Elmvale, Ontario, requires a full-time Christian Education Director commencing July 1, 2001. Résumé deadline April 30, 2001. Job description available from Elizabeth Hill, 705-322-2695, Fax: 705-322-0382.

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THE SUMMER INSTITUTE OF CHURCH MUSIC is holding its 32nd session from July 15 to 20, 2001, at BLEC in Whitby, Ontario. Clinicians: Marnie Giesbrecht and Joachim Seger, Edmonton; Harry Jansen, North Carolina. For info and registration forms, contact: Dr. Kenneth Inkster, Box 688, Alliston, Ontario L9P 1V8; Tel: 705-435-5786; Fax: 705-435-1052; inksterk@bconnex.net

THE WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY, of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, is seeking applicants for the position of EXECUTIVE SECRETARY. Enquiries should be made to: Mrs. Noreen Marshall, Women's Missionary Society, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, Ont. M3C 1J7. Deadline for applications: April 30, 2001.

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Sparrows

Matthew 10:29-30

God doesn't give a hoot
about flying.
Any angel can do that,

but falling,
that's a trick in heaven
bigger than Lazarus.

Bird or boy falling
out of a tree,
the snapping twig

of bone
gets God's respect
as if it were his own.

— Charles Cooper

called to wonder

Written by Jennifer O'Farrell,
St. Mark's Church, Don Mills, Ont.

The message about the cross doesn't make any sense to lost people. But for those of us who are being saved, it is God's power at work.

— I Corinthians 1:18 (*The Promise, CEV*)

I.N.R.I.



The Activity of the Cross

1. Trace the large cross found to the right, or print a copy from the "CALLED TO WONDER" Web page. Copy the cross outline onto a piece of cardboard. Cut out the cross and decorate it.

Read and talk about the Lord's Supper.
Jesus prayed at the Mount of Olives.

2. Trace the largest circle found on this page. Cut it out of black paper. Glue this dark circle to the centre of the cross.

Read and talk about Good Friday.
Jesus forgives his enemies.
The sky turns black.
Friends of Jesus watch at the cross.

3. Copy the smaller circle onto cardboard. Cut out this shape, decorate and then glue it to the middle of the black circle.

Read and talk about the stone in front of the tomb.
Which is your favourite story about Jesus?

4. Trace the jagged sunrise shape. Copy it onto coloured paper (red, orange, yellow or rosy pink). Cut out this spiky piece and glue it to the centre of the cross.

Read and talk about Easter morning.
The angel said, "Do not be afraid."
Peter runs to the tomb in disbelief.
Wonders! Joy!

Link to learning activities about **Holy Week** online at:
www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html

Do not be afraid. (Matthew 28:5-8)

Surprise! Peter runs! (Luke 24:12)

Wonders! (John 20:15-16)

Joy! Peace be with you! (John 20:20)

The Lord's Supper (Mark 14:22-26)
Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39-46)
The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-15)

A big stone (Matthew 27:59-60)
A favourite story about Jesus.
A favourite story told by Jesus.

Black

Decorate this circle in the same way as you decorated the cross.

Forgiveness (Luke 23:34)

The sun stopped shining. (Luke 23:44-46)

Those who knew Jesus could only watch. (Luke 23:49)

Prayer for Holy Week

Open my heart, dear God,
to the meaning of the cross.

Jesus prays in the garden on
the Mount of Olives, knowing
that God's caring is real.
Jesus forgives in the darkness,
speaking words
of love and faith.
A large stone before the tomb.
On the third day, Jesus is alive.

Open my heart, dear God,
to the meaning of the cross.

Lord, lead me. Lord, call me.
May I catch holy hope and
believe in the precious and
mighty power of your love.
Amen.

David Steele

Living with mortality

Hospice care is not about dying but about living

Yesterday, Joan and I joined Hospice of the Valley. It was one of the most difficult decisions I have ever faced. By doing so, I affirm my cancerous condition is terminal and, in all likelihood, I will die within six months. I also agree that, in the light of my poor reaction to radiation, the likelihood of significant help from chemotherapy is dubious. So I have opted for community and care and quality of life.

It's a strange time to join hospice because I feel better than I have in weeks. Finally, I am coming out of the weakness created by the radiation. My energy is up; my appetite has returned and I feel like a human being. I am hopeful hospice will assist me in developing a sensible exercise program and help me get back into normal living. I have graduated in the past three weeks from a wheelchair, to a walker, to a cane. So my decision to join hospice grows out of my quest for strength, not weakness.

Most folks and their families turn to hospice in the last few weeks of life, when the crises are evident. It is unusual for one like me who is fairly healthy to come in so early. The norm is for families to hold off till the final crisis. They are in the program less than a month. I think I understand why.

The hospice decision is so final! And it seems like giving up! It appears to operate at cross-purposes to our prayers and to the yearning of our souls. We cancer folk keep hoping for a medical breakthrough or an epiphany. It is hard to admit to oneself that such is unlikely to happen and to spend our energy making the best life we can.



There is an orange notice that comes with all the sign-up papers. We filled it out and got a neighbour to witness our signatures. It goes on the refrigerator with a magnet and says, in effect, to paramedics, "No heroic deeds of resuscitation here." Something about seeing that thing on the fridge got to both Joan and me. We held each other and wept for we are not ready for that sort of thing.

This morning, I see the larger picture. Hospice is not about dying but about living. It is here I choose to focus my energy. I am hoping to discover resources to enhance my own meditation program, support groups and so forth. I am ready to develop inner resources that will strengthen my body and soul. There is no firm timetable when it comes to cancer.

My hope is to live until April 6. On that day, I will be 70. As a boy, I recall when my grandfather turned 70. He told me, "Three-score years and 10 — that's what the Bible says is a full life." If I could make that, I'd have no grounds for regret, would I?

But my real goal is to outlive the hospice rubrics. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be alive six months from now. And have Medicare bugging me on a lovely June day about overstaying my welcome in the program. R

David Steele is a retired minister of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who lives in Sun City, Arizona. This item first appeared in *The Presbyterian Outlook* and is used here with permission.

Presbyterians Sharing. . .

2001

. . . proclaiming Christ in word and deed

The Gifts of God



"Take from among you an offering to the Lord; let whoever is of a generous heart bring the Lord's offering . . ."

— Exodus 35:5

For information, contact Education for Mission/Stewardship, The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. 1-800-619-7301, ext. 267, 272

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The world's children and you

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Church growth and new church development

There are no surprises when it comes to looking at the regional sources of decline over the past 20 years. Rural areas, especially in southwestern Ontario, southwestern Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, have been hit particularly hard, as well as the urban churches of the presbyteries of East Toronto (down 32 per cent), West Toronto (down 46 per cent) and Montreal (down 50 per cent). In contrast, areas that experienced significant population growth over the past 20 years, predominantly communities suburban to major urban centres, have seen increases in membership. It would seem that "as goes the neighbourhood, so goes the Presbyterian Church." But this is not the complete answer. We can learn from the experience of the presbyteries of Calgary-Macleod and Vancouver Island that a priority on church growth and new church development can make a significant difference.

— from the interim report of the Study Group to Research Membership Decline in The Presbyterian Church in Canada



Too small

If you ever think you're too small to be effective, you've never been in bed with a mosquito.

— Anita Roddich

Great thinkers of our time

Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life.

— Brooke Shields, during an interview to become spokesperson for a federal antismoking campaign

Moral Progress

In this century [20th], so many people have been deliberately killed by other people that the estimates of historians vary by tens of millions, and they end up by agreeing to split the difference or round off the victim count at the nearest ten million. One might conclude that it has not been a good century for the idea of progress in general, and of moral progress in particular.

— Richard John Neuhaus, "The Idea of Moral Progress"

On October 31 [2000], the Pope proclaimed Sir Thomas More the patron saint of politicians. As Cardinal Roger Etchegaray explained, the Pope wanted to remind politicians "of the absolute priority of God in the heart of public affairs."



— Miroslav Volf in *The Christian Century*

Marriage

By all means marry. If you get a good wife, you will become very happy. If you get a bad one, you will become a philosopher.

— Socrates

Children are natural mimics. They act like their parents in spite of all efforts to teach them good manners.

— James A. Simpson

Please pray for us in Alberta as we struggle with too much money and too little vision.

— Marie Cameron, president-elect of the National Council of the Catholic Women's League

Christian care

Is our main objective to care for the earth or to care for ourselves? The biblical view clearly mandates the first alternative (because when it is correctly carried out, the second is understood in its proper light), and repeatedly describes the second as the primary temptation that needs to be overcome. Perhaps the most significant challenge facing Christians today is determining how to resist an economy that thwarts or disfigures Christian care.

— Norman Wirzba

Rearranging church furnishings

We have been expected to believe at times that if we could but manage to arrange that the altar be in the centre, and the pulpit at the side of the church, that would make a distinct difference in the spiritual nature of our worship, and induce people to attend church services. How pathetic it has all been!

— Walter Bryden in *Why I Am a Presbyterian*


John Congram

Vera needs your help

Defending human rights in Malawi

Many in Canada, especially in our church, are familiar with the name of Vera Chirwa. At the General Assembly in 1994, Knox College took the unprecedented step of honouring her with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree.

Vera and her husband, Orton, played an active role in Malawi's struggle for democratic rights and independence. They were forced into exile in Tanzania where they founded the Malawi Freedom Movement. In 1981, they were kidnapped, charged with treason, found guilty and sentenced to death. Vera spent 12 years in prison — from 1981-84 in chains, in solitary confinement — until her death sentence was commuted. She was released in January 1993, three months after the unexpected death of her husband. Today, she is the executive director of the Malawi Centre for Advice, Research and Education on Rights.

But, once again, Vera fears for her personal safety with good reason. I spoke with her in March at Rev. Heather Jones's home in Mzuzu, Malawi. She was attending the first convocation of the university in that city.

Her recent problems began when the present government reintroduced a practice popular under the former Banda regime but banned in 1994: of paying young women to dance for the president. Vera issued a statement condemning this practice as demeaning to women, describing it as "using women as dancing puppets for the president." From that point, she began to face harassment from spokespeople for the president.

In December, the house she was in the process of buying burned down. This was the first house she had owned since all of her property had been confiscated by the previous Banda regime. The five million kwacha she eventually received as partial compensation was used to purchase and furnish her new home. But because of a mix-up in the transfer of the house, she received no compensation from the fire, precipitating a serious personal financial crisis. She now lives in a small guest-house on the property. All her furniture plus the many awards she had gathered over her life, including her honorary degree from Knox, were lost in the fire.

Then, on March 12, thugs entered and looted her home. They raped her housegirls, tied up Vera and her daughter-in-law, and forced them into the bedroom. They seemed in no hurry, returning to demand that Vera instruct them on how to run her car. "We will take you, rob and kill you, and your body will never be found," they told her. But, after a few yards, the car's alarm went off and they took their loot and ran.

Throughout the raid, Vera continued to pray. When one of them told her to stop, she continued because, as she put it, "I realized they were scared of Jesus."

This series of misfortunes has all come after her criticisms of the government. This may be coincidental, but Vera has to wonder — especially since her repeated requests for more protection have gone unheeded.

In fairness to President Bakili Muluzi, he came to offer his condolences when her house burned down. Vera seems less concerned about the president than about the people around him, some of whom believe the popular Chirwa aspires to the presidency.

"I am a Commissioner for the Organization of African Unity [OAU] and Special Rapporteur for Prisons in Africa," Vera states. "Can't my government be proud of that? People of my status in other countries are respected and well-protected."

Before I left Africa on April 1, one alleged attacker was arrested; but, when brought to court, he was charged with a different crime. Subsequently, others were arrested but later escaped custody.

How you can help Vera Chirwa:

- You might begin by writing her an encouraging letter of support and solidarity. It can be sent to Box 30479, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi, Central Africa, or e-mailed to malawicarer@malawi.net.
- Consider sending a respectful letter to President Bakili Muluzi, UDF Office, Box 3052, Blantyre, Malawi, Central Africa. Express your concern about Vera's misfortunes and your hope the government will provide protection for her.
- Finally, you may wish to talk to your own Member of Parliament and ask that he or she pass on your concerns to the Malawian ambassador in Ottawa.

Our church is a partner with Vera's church, the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. Vera Chirwa has spent her life defending the rights of others. We have the opportunity to make a small contribution to ensure hers.

John Congram

St. Andrew's

Presbyterian Church

Guelph, Ontario

Prayerfully seeks two (2) Ministers to work as a team

Minister of Christian Education and Lay Development

This individual will:

- have responsibility for all aspects of Christian education for all age groups
- integrate all age groups in the overall life and ministry of the congregation
- develop programs for lay leadership training
- develop the role of youth through programming and leadership training
- provide support and leadership for ministries of the congregation related to international, national and local missions.

Minister of Worship and Pastoral Care

This individual will:

- recognize that this congregation places a high priority on worship and excellent preaching
- have strengths in homiletics and liturgics firmly grounded in Reformed theology
- have experience in both traditional and contemporary forms of worship
- give diligent attention to all areas of pastoral need
- have competence in pastoral intervention in situations of crisis or conflict
- organize strategies and training programs with the goal of strengthening lay participation in pastoral care.

Both positions will require good administrative and organizational abilities. Visioning and planning will be critical components of these ministries. Coordinating and directing the ministry of the congregation will require a strong orientation to lay ministry and an appreciation of music which is an integral part of the life of St. Andrew's.

Please submit profiles by ***June 15, 2001,*** *to:*

Reverend Bill Johnston, Interim Moderator
54 Queen St. N., Kitchener, ON N2H 2H2
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our cover

Photo by Karen Watts Plater, Presbyterian World Service and Development. After Hurricane Mitch devastated southern Honduras in November 1998, support from PWS&D and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank helped the community where these children live rebuild.

Wheelchair access

Six years ago, my husband underwent back surgery to correct a condition brought on by polio, which he had suffered many years earlier. The surgery was not successful and, unable to walk, he was confined to a wheelchair.

Our church was built in 1950. There are many stairs to climb before reaching the sanctuary. The thought of a ramp or wheelchair access did not seem to be in the minds of the architects or builders.

Being an active man who participated in all the church activities — choir, board of managers, etc. — it was hard for him to adjust to the fact he could no longer attend church for worship and fellowship with other Christians at a time when he needed it most. *This should never ever be!*

My husband passed away last year. In lieu of flowers, I requested that donations be given to our church for a wheelchair access. The response was a tribute to him. Perhaps, by 2002, our congregation will be blessed with access so everyone can worship and be with the church family.

I hope churches everywhere will see this need and act on it.

Betty Methley,
Toronto

We publish as many letters as possible. All are subject to editing for meaning and space, and must include the correspondent's name and full address. Letters are intended to provide for the wide expression of views among our readers. Publication does not imply endorsement by either the *Record* or The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Praise for the quilts

I want to thank whoever came up with the idea of displaying quilts at the 125th General Assembly and, then, to send them to various churches in Canada. My husband and I saw them in Pictou, Nova Scotia, during the launching of the ship *Hector*. I returned home to tell the women of our church that our quilt looked good among the many more elaborate "theme" quilts.

Since the quilts have been travelling around Canada, we have received one letter from a gentleman who was raised in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. He was thrilled to find his parents' names included among more than 600 on our quilt.

Linda Ard,
Meota, Sask.

Second-class citizens?

Further input into the issue of sexual orientation might be valuable for your readers, as suggested in a Letter in the February *Record*.

I believe "second-class citizens" is a misnomer. Citizenship has nothing to do with Christianity. While Christianity has an ethical obligation to be part of everything that happens in the world, and should state its case from the pulpit and as a witness to the world, there is a distinct difference between the things of the flesh and the things of the Spirit. Some believers get caught up in the first and cannot separate the issues. The Lord did not heal people by sexual preference nor condemn their spiritual talents in building his church. While only four to seven per cent of humankind are slightly different in sexual orientation, they are, like us, God's creatures. As such, they deserve Christian charity.

William B. Fleming
Ingleside, Ont.,

I cannot understand why all this discussion is being tossed about. For God-fearing people, it is "cut and dry": God said NO! In discussing this subject [homosexuality], are we saying: "God is wrong. He does not really mean that"? Because of their "sexual orientation," they



will NOT be citizens in the Kingdom of God. Any sexual act other than between a husband and his wife is an abomination to God and is punishable by being cut off from the people (Leviticus 18:22-30).

The only thing the Presbyterian Church or any God-fearing person can do is to pray for them and hope they will change and save their souls.

Philip Lovell,
Mississauga, Ont.

Dream or illusion?

The Moderator's dream ("Jesus visits T.O." in the December *Record*), I think, was more a figment of his imagination. I believe Jesus knows more about denominations than we do. "That they may all be one … " — does Jesus mean all to be one denomination or that all are one in believing Jesus is Lord and Saviour?

The hyperbole about government spending in connection with welfare is a political diatribe. I know there are improvements to be made, but this is a poor picture to paint of the welfare system in Canada.

The illustration of the young people is further nonsense. Yes, young people do not want to go to church, but I suspect the reason is not the music or "some old guy talking on and on." To follow the teachings of Jesus is too restrictive for the life-styles of the modern generation.

I cannot say much about nursing homes. At least the people are being cared for. There will always be some who are neglected by their families, but most are not.

In my opinion, Glen Davis has insulted the work of the churches and the people who are the church. Many generations have struggled with these problems and done their best, and will continue to do so.

H. M. Willows,
Surrey, B.C.

Reaching out

This morning, I picked up the January issue of the *Record* and read your interesting article "Presbyterian strengths." It so happened I had recently reread Peter Denton's challenging article "Preaching to the unconverted" (February 1994 *Record*). I still feel challenged by it.

That Presbyterians have great strength but need to "unleash their gifts" to help empower them for the particular ministry God has for each of them is certainly true. The need to understand how powerful the Holy Spirit is in accomplishing that is paramount. Too many Christians still see the power of the Holy Spirit confined to a "small, quiet voice." Through renewal or revival, the power of the Spirit can be understood and experienced.

When are we going to wake up, arise from our comfortable pews and seek the power and desire through the Holy Spirit to reach out to those outside the church and to the weak in faith?

May 2001 be another year of blessings to the writers and readers of our *Presbyterian Record.*

Ed Mason,
Toronto

Credit where credit is due

As the year 2001 opens what many claim is the official beginning of the 21st century, I give thanks. I am proud to be a Canadian. As a social activist in a denomination of a Christian church in Canada, I am proud of the dedicated, non-stop efforts of our people. Their vision has been a catalyst in the many deliberations by the Canadian government regarding Canada's forgiveness of debt for the poorest countries of the world. Those dedicated planners in the Canadian Council of Churches who have crusaded to throw off the oppression of usury deserve the highest medal.

May the prayers of all of us in this millennium year be directed for all nations of the world, not only for debt forgiveness but for a new beginning for the have-not nations by the generosity of the have nations. "Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, 'Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land'" (Deuteronomy 15:11).

We are often quick to condemn our leaders and the government for inaction on needy and just causes. Join me in praise for their efforts in debt forgiveness.

Robert King,
Rodney, Ont.

Bruises

mar her face once again. She lives in a makeshift shelter in a doorway off a back alley near the Hall with a boyfriend who controls her and beats her up. She says she wants to start a new life, but she can't seem to leave her abuser. Maybe she feels she deserves no better. After all, she's been abused all her life. Maybe she feels life would be worse with no one at all. Her contacts with her children are sporadic at best. Friends come and go, but they don't stick around when the booze and drugs are gone. Her health is failing. Life on the streets takes its toll. We have stood by her through everything. We can only pray she will find the home for which she yearns.

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Dorothy Lake Family Camp

The *Record* regrets that, in listing Presbyterian camps in its April issue, it inadvertently omitted Dorothy Lake Family Camp. This camp, located near Kirkland Lake, Ontario, provides two one-week camps between July 28 and August 10. Sites are available for tents and trailers. For more information, contact: Margo or Harvey at 1-705-840-2747 or visit the camp's Web site at www.dorothylake.on.ca.

Thanks, Jim

Jim Taylor's last column on "Revisiting a vanishing world" (February *Record*) was excellent! His 30-year quest to "express the message of the Bible in contemporary terms" was an admirable and well-directed effort. The tremendous advances in knowledge make the task more pressing than ever for making the Bible relevant and intelligible to modern culture. If we choose to remain hard-nosed about traditional interpretations (the nature of God, etc.), then we, too, will become agents in turning the Bible into "meaningless folklore."

Thanks, Jim, and good luck!

Paul Marshall,
Barrie, Ont.

An unbearable advertisement?

The advertisement for Greenpeace in the January 2001 issue of the *Record* provoked many emotions in me. When my ire subsided, I realized there were three issues I must speak to.

A "spirit bear" may be part of the beliefs of indigenous peoples of northwestern North America, but what does it have to do with Christianity? The spirit we should be concerned with is the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, I do not think Christians should be told by any organization how or what to think. The Bible states our morality, including what on the earth is to be used and how.

And what about the truth of the advertisement? Was the picture of an actual old-growth forest on crown land or was it on private land? Was the picture of an actual "spirit bear"? It looked like a grizzly bear to me.

I resent being told by a group what to think, particularly when their words do not follow the teachings of our Lord. It is not a sin to cut down trees. We all live in houses made with wood.

Richard Horney,
Trail, B.C.

Timely article

I have just finished reading the March *Record* and want you to know I think it is one of the best editions I have read — a most useful choice of subjects.

In particular, the excerpt from Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point* on how people behave when they are short of time made me realize that, in my busy life, I sometimes cut others short who may need nothing more, perhaps, than a kind word or a receptive ear to their problems. I truly believe " ... you are a better person when you are not in a rush."

Thank you for this timely article.

Angela Hawaleshka,
Toronto

Oh, *that* Metropolitan Church

With regard to your editorial in the March issue of the *Presbyterian Record*, permit me to correct an error.

In the precise context of the editorial, the designation "Metropolitan" Church in Toronto should have included one additional word to identify correctly which "Metropolitan" Church was being referred to. Your reference obviously was to Metropolitan COMMUNITY Church. For the sake of clarity, it must be emphasized this church has no connection with the majestic church edifice occupying McGill Square at the corner of Queen and Church streets, Toronto, that we know as Metropolitan UNITED Church.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity.

John C. Silvester,
Bridgewater, N.S.

The eye of the beholder

Congratulations on your March 2001 cover photo depicting a contemplative young woman amid the splendour of a forest sanctuary. The *Record* has finally caught up with the rest of the world in recognizing that sex sells. I tried in vain to find out where this young woman attends church, or even her name. She is certainly not representative of the average young person in any church or social gathering I have attended. One can only assume the idea was to catch the eye and draw attention with this provocative come-on.

As a father of a daughter about the same age, I was disgusted the *Record* used such tactics to promote what I am sure is meant to be a serious article on youth ministry. What you have said to the average young person in The Presbyterian Church in Canada is that looks count. Looks get you onto the cover of the *Record* and, sadly, onto the cover of every other secular publication in print. From the dwindling hundreds of young people active in churches across this country, why couldn't you find one who better represents the average young man or woman?

You need to send a different message to the parents and youth of our church who are struggling daily to find their places in a shallow, vain society. It is the responsibility of the church and its members to affirm the value of character in our young people and not their superficial appearance.

Dave Ball,
Whitby, Ont.

Never on a Sunday

The Alliance leader's personal beliefs should be big points in his favour. We need more politicians, both federal and provincial, who are not campaigning on the Lord's day of rest. What are the beliefs of other leaders? What would Jesus do?

Jean Porter-Lucado,
Beeton, Ont.

Welcome to
Ormstown Church
Ormstown, Quebec
a new member
of the *Record*'s
Every Home Plan


Glen Davis

The declining voice of the church

When governments abuse their exercise of power, it is time for Christians to call them to account

Recently, I heard this complaint: "The church used to be respected. It had access to government leaders. When the church spoke, the government paid attention. But, today, the church is ignored. Why?"

The reasons are many. Fewer Canadians attend church, and the government pays less attention to a shrinking constituency. Fewer parliamentarians are members of churches so they are less likely to be influenced by the voice of the church. There is tremendous pressure within political parties to toe the party line, so voices that challenge the party direction are not welcome. On many issues, the church does not speak with one voice, so governments play one off against the other. Official church statements on social justice issues often do not enjoy the strong support of the grassroots church membership, and governments know that. And when we do speak as a church, we sometimes come off sounding as if we have all the answers, instead of raising questions that push governments to explain how their policies are producing justice for the poor and benefit for the common good.

But despite all those reasons for the decline in the influence of the church on public policy, I believe the real reason lies at our own doorstep. It is a theological reason. It has to do with our understanding of the gospel. If the gospel is mainly good news to *me* for *my* forgiveness and salvation, if *my* faith is primarily a private and personal matter between *me* and God, if my goal is to have a happy life and peace of mind and a ticket to heaven at the end, then I have privatized the faith and made it solely a matter of my personal spiritual well-being. I have divorced the spiritual (private) from the public (political).

But that is neither biblical nor Presbyterian. When we attend induction or ordination services of ministers or elders, we hear them declare acceptance of our "subordinate standards." The subordinate standards of The Presbyterian Church in Canada are the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the *Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation* and *Living Faith*.

The Declaration states: " ... the Church may not hold aloof from the affairs of the Nation.... Her preaching, sacraments, and discipline confront the Nation with Christ's judgment and grace" (Section 8).

Living Faith states: "Justice ... protests against everything that destroys human dignity ... Justice stands with our neighbours in their struggle for dignity and respect and *demands the exercise of power for the common good*" (Section 8.4).

Governments often exercise power for the common good, but sometimes not. When they abuse their exercise of power, it is time for Christians to stand up and call them to account.

In 1989, for example, the House of Commons unanimously agreed "to seek to achieve the goal of eliminating child poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000." Last year's reports indicate a 43 per cent *increase* in the number of poor children in Canada. Is that exercising power for the common good? Governments have reduced or eliminated funding for affordable housing, the major factor in eliminating homelessness. Is that exercising power for the common good? Successive governments have promised speedy settlement of outstanding land rights issues for native peoples, and decades have passed with little or no progress. Is that exercising power for the common good? Standards for protection of the environment have been eroded in several jurisdictions. Is that exercising power for the common good? There are many other examples.

Yes, the influence of the church on public policy has declined. But it doesn't have to be that way. We elect policy-makers. If we speak often enough, and loudly enough and in numbers enough, they will listen

The question is, Where is the united, strong voice of Canadian Christians calling governments to account? Why are we so quiet in the face of such scandals in our public life? Is it because we do not care? I don't believe that.

Is it because we don't think "they" will listen? Maybe, but that is self-



photo by Jean-Frédéric Beauchesne

On the 2000 Human Development Index, produced by the United Nations Development Program, Malawi ranked 163rd out of 175 countries. Canada ranked first. It is time to close the gap. The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Malawi is a strong partner of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. PWS&D is working with the Blantyre and Livingstonia synods to address basic needs. Water, agriculture, literacy, child protection, economic development, civic education and AIDS awareness programs are helping Malawians build a brighter future for their children.

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defeating. The widow who finally got justice at the hands of the unjust judge (Luke 18) did so because she would not quit!

Or is it because we don't believe it is our job to get involved in public policy issues? I hope not. I pray not. Jesus declared that he came to bring good news to the poor. He gave us a vision of a new way to live together: a way that loves our neighbour as ourselves, a way that puts the Kingdom of God above the bottom line, a way that values children and the vulnerable of society, a way that puts the common good ahead of individual profit.

If that is the vision for which we stand, and if our elected representatives enact policies that fly in the face of that vision, then what does our discipleship demand of us? It might be a phone call or letter to our Member of Parliament. It might be signing a petition. It might be taking a tax cut or rebate and using it to benefit those who are poor. But whatever it is, surely it is not silence.

Yes, the influence of the church on public policy has declined. But it doesn't have to be that way. We elect policy-makers. If we speak often enough, and loudly enough and in numbers enough, they will listen — and the Kingdom will be one step closer.

Glen Davis

Moderator's itinerary

May 6
125th anniversary
Knox, Leamington, Ont.

May 7
WMS Council, Crieff Hills, Ont.

May 10
The Presbyterian College, Montreal, convocation

May 18-20
Thunder Bay, Ont.

May 21-24
Brandon, Man., and Winnipeg

May 25-27
Flin Flon, Man.

David Webber

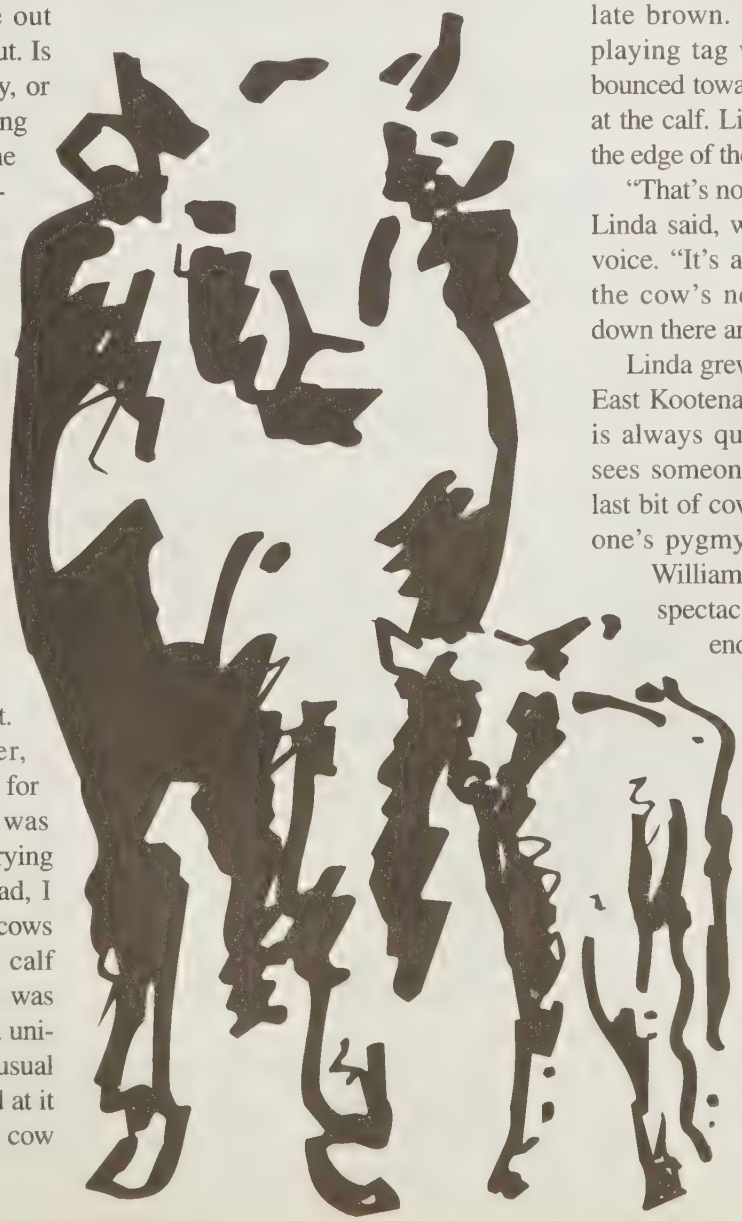
The clear light of love

Celebrating self-sacrificing love

I turned 50 years old not long ago. Several friends, who had already crossed this wonderful threshold in life, sent birthday cards expressing positive sentiments about turning 50. They all said something to the effect that "The best of life is from age 50 and beyond." From my limited experience of this "best of life," I am still trying to figure out what on earth they were talking about. Is it the rampaging loss of my memory, or my rapidly receding hairline, or having to get up three times at night, or the fading of my eyesight and the wonderful experience of tripping over most everything due to bifocals?

The fading of my eyesight is the least best of the best, as far as I am concerned. Peering through the tunnel-like frames of corrective lenses, which always seem to be smudged with grease from my ever increasing eyebrows (the only place where hair seems to want to grow on my post-50 noggin), is not my idea of a good time. Nothing looks the same through glass and grease. Serious mistakes can be made. The other day is a case in point.

Linda and I and our daughter, Chelsea, were trekking to Tatla Lake for church. Linda was driving, and I was squinting through my glasses and trying to enjoy the scenery. Below the road, I could see a lovely herd of Hereford cows and calves feeding in a field. One calf stood out from all the rest. Its head was completely white and its body was a uniform chocolate brown. It was an unusual colour for a Hereford calf, so I stared at it for some time. It bounced toward a cow that was facing it, almost touching the cow's nose. The cow, which had been sniffing a tiny bundle at her feet, rushed at the bouncing calf. The calf bounced back a few yards and stood facing the cow. A few moments later, the whole procedure was repeated. Turning to Linda, I said, "Look at that wonderful scene down there — a calf playing tag with its mother." Linda slowed the pickup down and glanced over the edge of the road.



"Which calf are you talking about?" she asked. "There must be a hundred of them out in that field."

"It's the one with the head that is completely white and the body a rich chocolate brown. Look, it's doing it again, playing tag with its mother." The calf bounced toward the cow. The cow rushed at the calf. Linda pulled the truck over to the edge of the road and skidded to a stop.

"That's not a calf, you blind old coot," Linda said, with obvious concern in her voice. "It's a bald eagle. And it is after the cow's newborn calf. We best get down there and do something."

Linda grew up on a cattle ranch in the East Kootenays of British Columbia and is always quick to intervene when she sees someone's animal in distress. Her last bit of cowboying was herding someone's pygmy goats off the highway to Williams Lake. It was a foot-racing spectacle, but the goats eventually ended up in their pen. I cheered Linda on from sidelines then, and I planned to do the same now. However, motherhood intervened.

As we watched, several other Hereford mothers rushed over to the cow defending her newborn. They stood beside her and faced the bald eagle, daring it to make another move. Nothing happened for a few minutes in this eyeball-to-eyeball con-

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frontation. Eventually, the eagle made one last half-hearted, bouncing, ground attack. The Hereford mothers stood their ground in a daring stare. Finally, the eagle spread its wings and flew away in search of a less feisty meal.

Later in the evening, while driving home, my mind went back to the Hereford mothers and their eagle defence. There is something about the passionate love of mothers for their children, even for children not their own, that is compelling. Mothers willing to lay down their lives for their children.

If you are a wilderness wanderer as I tend to be, you can see the passionate love of mothers all the time in nature. The killdeer mom, that thrusts herself between any perceived danger and her young, screaming her loud, persistent, plaintive trilling "kill-dee, kill-dee," is only one example. Human mothers are known to do the same kind of thing. A childhood friend of mine gave her life trying to save her adult child from drowning. Amazing mothering love that we celebrate once a year on Mother's Day.

And, yet, some of us wonder about our mothers. Mine gave me up in a divorce. Others have had more difficult motherhood experiences. It has often caused me to wonder. But despite all the wondering, I am still compelled by the love of mothers for their children. It seems to be the ultimate love, and I celebrate it — especially on Mother's Day.

But there is a greater love than mothering love. It is Easter love. It is the love God has for you and me dramatically displayed on the cross of Christ. The laying down of his life to defend you and me from our ultimate enemies, sin and death. Nails in the soft, loving hands of God who became flesh in Jesus. Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, God puts it profoundly: "Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands" (Isaiah 49:15). R

David Webber is a minister of The Cariboo Presbyterian Church, a house church ministry in the Cariboo district of British Columbia.

pastoral epistles from peter plymley II

My dear editor:

"Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, creeps on this petty pace from day to day … " A *long* winter in most of Canada did not serve as inspiration for that moan from MacBeth, but neither did he have the prospect of General Assembly to beckon him from despair to hope. (Or, maybe he did, but it would have been a Scots, Knoxonian General Assembly — low on heart-warming "caring and sharing.")

I have often wondered why our leaking gunboat of a once proud fleet didn't take more advantage of this gathering in order to sound the depths, or the shallows, of our little sea of faith. To change the metaphor, what better opportunity for an annual check-up? Why not have this gathering, this court, supply the data we need for the studies and projections that provide so much satisfying, guilt-inducing gloom or, contrariwise, sanguine, insanely cheery optimism in the face of all the "challenges"?

Why not survey the core of believers — clergy, representative elders and national staff — since we can safely assume, at the very least, they have nothing better to do in the first week of June when hockey is almost over, baseball doesn't yet count, and the snow is almost gone? For instance, on current issues (he said, always mindful of the obligation to be "useful" in the cause of the *Record*'s Every Home Plan), why not ask the following questions of each commissioner and each ever-so-helpful presenter at "briefing sessions" who makes justifying the ways of God to man look like child's play?

Peter has some suggestions to help our leaking gunboat sound its little sea of faith

This year, one of the major points of discussion will be that proposal to allow, by interim act (the "Try it, you'll like it" method of introducing change), qualified laypeople to preside, temporarily, at the sacraments in places where isolation deprives a congregation of a settled minister and, therefore, regular access to the aforementioned sacraments. (Given our average age and demographics, we can assume the focus is on Holy Communion more than Baptism.)

I suggest the following survey questions be asked:

1. What is your understanding of a "settled" minister?
   (a) one you can't get rid of
   (b) one who has quit reading the U.S. pulpit vacancy ads in *The Christian Century*
   (c) the more modestly ambitious who have quit reading the vacancy ads in the *Record*
   (d) one who has begun to recycle old sermons or has access to Internet sermon sites.

2. What is your definition of "isolation"?
   (a) too far for me to drive
   (b) more than an hour from Toronto
   (c) beyond "spitting distance" of the Canadian border (the unit of measurement favoured by national staff).

3. How do you tell such lay ministers their "term" at full ministry has expired?
   (a) your "due by" date has come and gone
   (b) some desperate graduate has accepted a call here
   (c) we need another Sunday school teacher.

4. What, in your mind, are the greatest inducements to such a change in the theology of different gifts and responsibilities?
   (a) Clergy — Additional income from:
      (i) serving as custodian
      (ii) serving as treasurer
      (iii) serving as organist.
   (b) Laity
      (i) avoiding the cost of moving expenses
      (ii) not having to break in a stranger
      (iii) she/he had always wanted to run the church anyway.

A second "focus point" could gather information on the proposed removal of Latin terms from court proceedings.

5. What do you think about the removal of all Latin terms from the courts in the interests of clarity, intelligibility and sweet sonority?
   (a) the change from "sederunt" to "sitting" reminds one of the golden years of train travel and dining cars
   (b) it removes the awful intestinal overtones of "sederunt"
   (c) it doesn't hurt my brain as much.

6. Do you find the proposed change to be in keeping with the advance of our glorious, almost common tongue as evidenced by:
   (a) "gate" being used as a universal suffix for every political scandal?
   (c) the ubiquitous acknowledgement that not a dollar in Canada is ever anything but "hard-earned"?
   (d) the poetic insight and political propriety of the old hymn texts altered (alt.) in the new *Book of Praise* so they read and sing like a Homer Simpson monologue?

These are only two of many stop-the-press issues before us, but I hope I have remained,

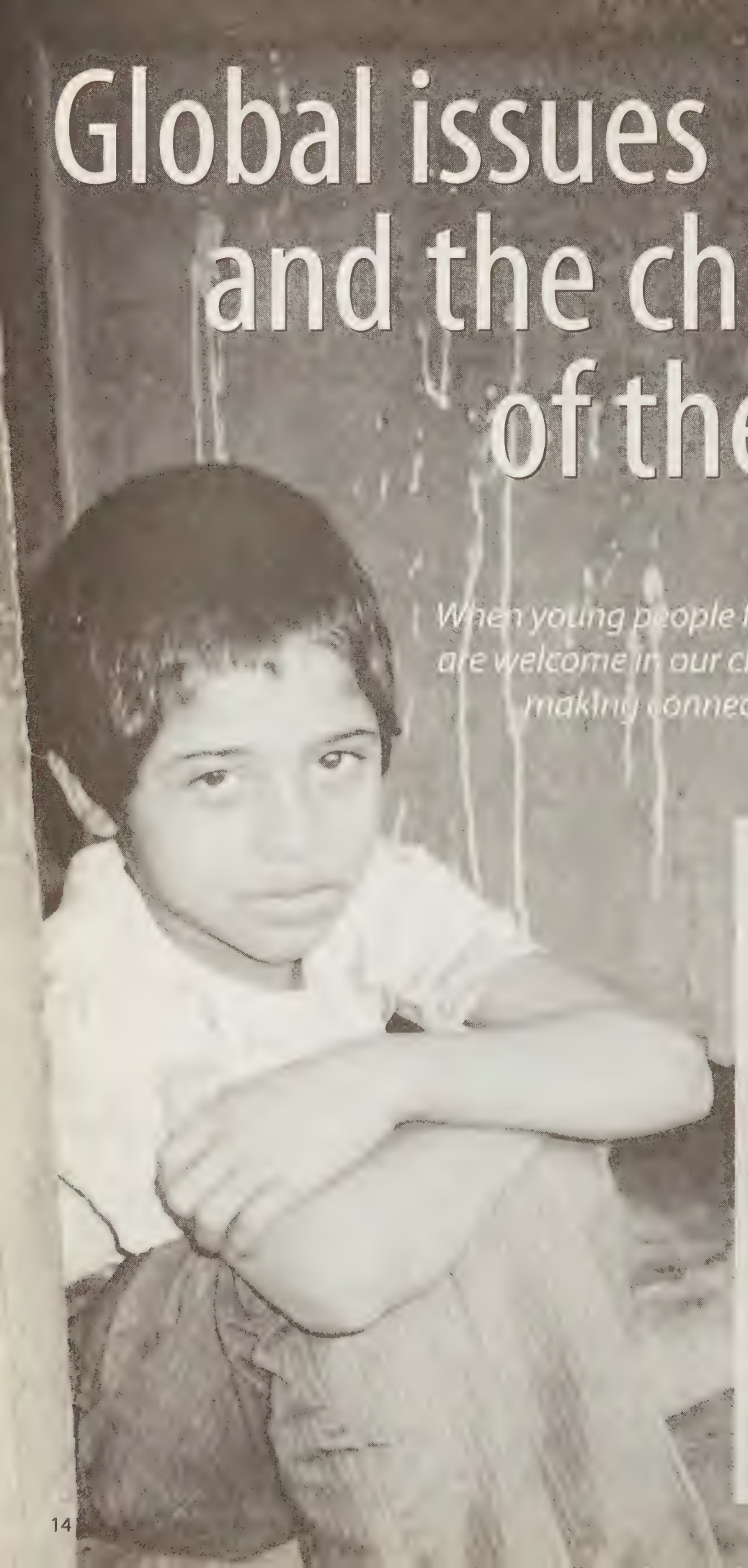
Usefully yours,



Global issues and the children of the world

by Anne Sounders

When young people find that global concerns are welcome in our churches, they might start making connections between their lives and the Christian faith



The world's children and us

"Let the little children come" (Luke 18:15)

How little the priorities of the world have changed in 2,000 years! As in Jesus' day, children in our world remain among the least valued, most vulnerable and most dependent. They cry out for freedom, for protection, for healing and for nourishment. Yet, the world continues to push children aside. *We* continue to push children aside. As in Jesus' day, most of us focus our lives on attaining material wealth, security, power and prestige. We lose sight of our covenant to be God's people in loving relationship with God and all God's creation.

Think back to the disciples journeying to Jerusalem with Jesus. Sensing the urgency and importance of their mission, they focused on future possibilities for themselves. Expecting Jesus to overthrow the oppressive Roman government, James and John felt sufficiently confident of personal gain that they asked Jesus to promise them positions of power. Had it occurred to any of the disciples that, in the midst of such important business, Jesus would be

#9 in the series focusing on ministry with children, teens and young adults

interested in young children? When the disciples sternly ordered the children away, Jesus not only welcomed the children, but he also said, " ... it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs" (Luke 18:16). Yet, his teaching went unheeded: later in Jerusalem, the disciples argued among themselves about which of them was the greatest.

How many of us heed Jesus' teaching about being like little children? Aren't most of us like the disciples? We are intent upon our own journey. We applaud the benefits of globalization. We buy the latest fashions without regard for the children's fingers that created them. We drink coffee and eat high protein diets without regard for the fertile land being used to meet our "wants" instead of the nutritional needs of the farmers' children. We fill the atmosphere with increasing concentrations of carbon although the resulting global warming may lower food production in the tropical climates of developing countries where the majority of the world's children live and starve. We eagerly anticipate medical and drug research that benefits us but may be neither relevant nor available to the majority of the world's suffering children. We are thankful we weren't born in a war-torn country where children are both the victims and the perpetrators of the violence, but do we alter our own lives to understand and change how this has come to be? Like the disciples, we are caught up in where we are going and who we will be once we get there. We push aside the distractions ...

— like Songsuda who has been sexually exploited since she was 13. She knows of other Thai girls who were taken into the sex trade as young as five years of age.

— like Shalini and her sister, Priyadashini, who are among the Dalit children regarded as slaves in India. At age eight and 12, they were kidnapped, sold to work 16-hour days and sprayed with pepper powder in their eyes and on their lips if they complained.

— like Khunara who spends his days scavenging in the Phnom Penh dump where he also lives in Cambodia. He is exposed to contaminated food and water, mosquitoes carrying malaria and dengue, and the diseases transmitted from rats and other pests that inhabit the garbage dump.

— like the five Saquic children who, as Mayans growing up in the militarized society of Guatemala, have known only poverty and oppression. They live in fear for their lives without their father, a pastor and human rights advocate who was brutally murdered.

— like Thakosa and Kadaonda, Malawian children born with very low birth weight. Should they survive, they will likely grow up malnourished to become victims of malaria or orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

Many factors contribute to children's experiences of enslavement, violence and physical weakness. Among them are poverty, culture, conflict, malnutrition, inadequate immunization, lack of clean water, little or no schooling, and poor access to health care. The underlying causes are complex and interrelated; and, although we are often reluctant to admit it, the causes are also interconnected with our lives.

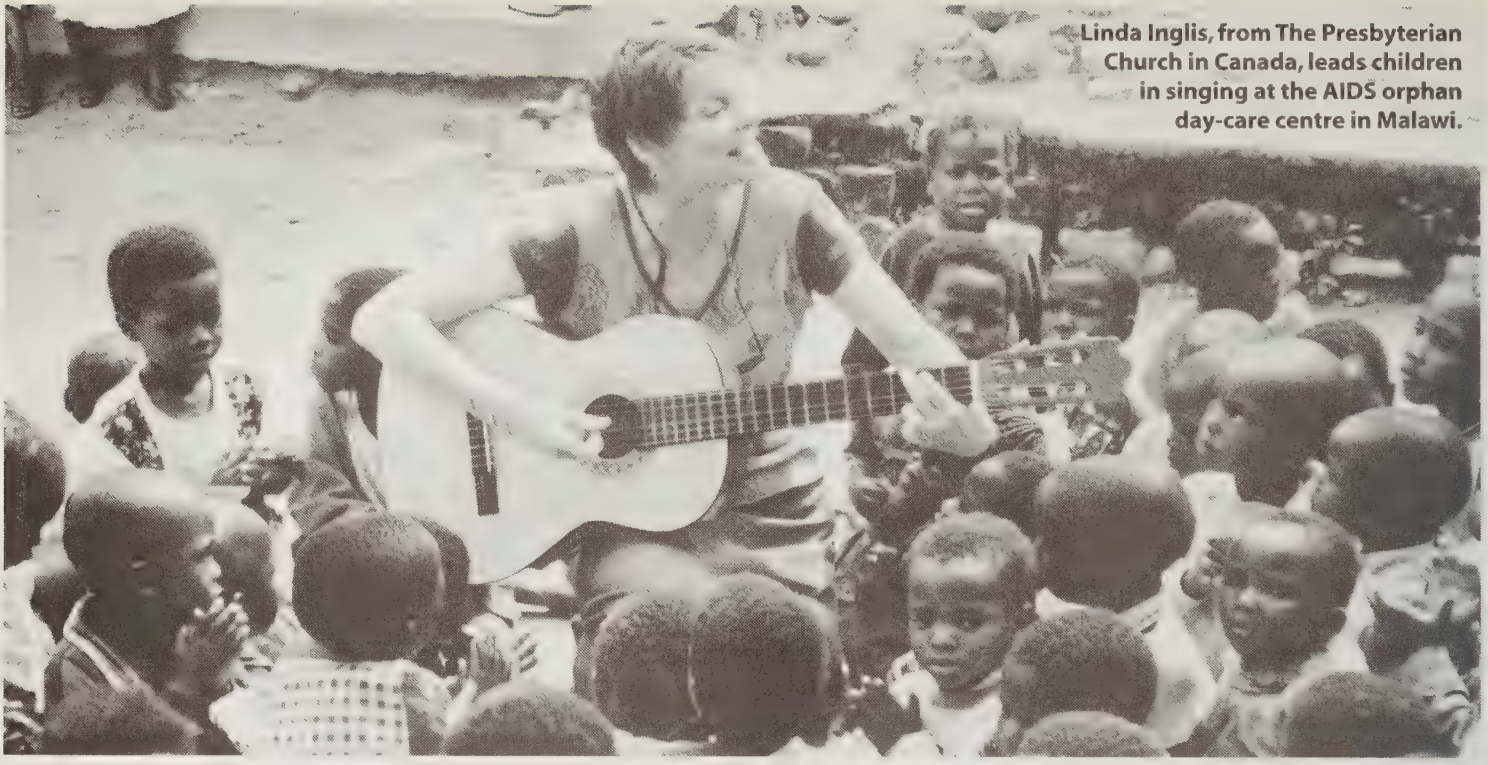
On our journey into the 21st century, we make decisions and choices — as individuals, as communities of faith, as nations — about our priorities and our goals, about how we are going to live. On our journey, we have already fallen into step with the 20 per cent of the world's population that has taken 83 per cent of the world's resources. On our journey, we accompany those who collect annual interest payments in excess of $150 billion from developing countries while giving them less than $65 billion in aid. On our journey, we tolerate governments that spend $868 billion a year to support military forces. What is the effect of our journey on the world's children?

- Every 2.7 seconds, one child younger than five years old dies from hunger and related causes.
- Every minute, more than five young men and women become infected with HIV/AIDS. Since its onset, HIV/AIDS has killed 3.8 million children and orphaned 13 million more.
- Every day, 19,000 children die as a result of money going to foreign creditors instead of to basic health, education and clean water.
- Every year, thousands of children are killed as a direct result of fighting — from knife wounds, bullets, bombs and landmines.

"The powerful have always been willing to baptize the status quo and name it 'peace,' and the impotent are regularly accused of being troublemakers when all they seek is justice"

— Sam Keen

There are more young people in the world today than ever before — almost a third of the world's population is under the age of 15 and another quarter between the ages of 10 and 24. Children, youth and young adults are likely to make up more than half the casualties of any human devastation whether it is a war, epidemic or earthquake. Even those young people who are not directly harmed by such events will have their lives profoundly affected because of their dependence upon adults. Apart from such major events, the majority of the world's young people are living in less developed countries and suffering on a day-to-day basis. According to the UNICEF report *The State of the World's Children 2001*, the rest of the world continues to ignore these children's desperate needs. UNICEF estimates that it would take $80 billion a year to ensure that every baby has access to basic sanitation, medical treatment and education. About a tenth of this would be enough to ensure that all children receive schooling.



Linda Inglis, from The Presbyterian Church in Canada, leads children in singing at the AIDS orphan day-care centre in Malawi.

- Every year, more than one million children die because they have malaria along with some other illness like malnutrition.

As we journey toward the prosperity of globalization, anticipating future possibilities for ourselves, will we — like the disciples — disregard Jesus' call to value the weakest, the most vulnerable, the least in our world? Or will we renounce goals for self-aggrandizement and power? Only when we heed our Lord's teachings, only when we turn our lives toward loving relationships of service to God, each other and all God's creation, only then will all the world's children be welcomed and blessed.

Our children and global issues

"Let global issues come into our churches."

While the priorities of the world may have remained the same over the past 2,000 years, people's day-to-day realities have changed. Our young people encounter increasing diversity among their schoolmates and they are bombarded by the visual reality of global issues on TV. More and more students in Canadian schools:

- walk through the halls speaking a first language other than English or French
- have memories of oppression and violence — have, perhaps, themselves carried a weapon
- have lived in a refugee camp.

Students with such experiences may or may not be in our church school groups, but they are part of the lives of many young people who do attend our churches. As a result, global issues are part of the lives of young Canadians today.

Five years ago, I conducted a survey of church school participants between nine and 18 years of age to help me tune into their interests, attitudes and concerns. My findings concurred with the work of Bibby and Posterski (*Teen Trends*, 1992) who concluded that Canadian young people "see their existence in global terms" with the majority of them saying that Canada needs "to be highly involved in world issues like the environment, illiteracy and human rights." In their study, close to four in 10 also called for involvement in the areas of arms control, disaster relief and Third World development. Church school participants in my study most often men-

Presbyterian World Service and Development responds

PWS&D supports education, health care, agriculture and income-generating projects that help communities build brighter futures for their children. The following are a few of the ways PWS&D support helps make a difference:

- community-based orphan care centres in Malawi help families cope with the growing number of orphans from HIV/AIDS
- education programs in Nicaragua help children fulfil their dreams of becoming nurses, teachers and doctors
- AIDS/HIV Control, a project run by the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, debunks myths about HIV/AIDS and educates people on prevention
- income-generating activities in India and Central America help families break their dependency on their children's income so they can send them to school instead of to work
- food security programs help children enjoy a healthy diet and grow to be healthy, strong adults
- ecumenical peace-building initiatives in countries like Colombia and Sudan help break cycles of war and violence.

Many times, children and youth are active participants in PWS&D programs. Their energy and creative ideas contribute to the success of the relief and development programs.

- After school, children and youth help clear away debris from the earthquake in El Salvador to make room for new houses that will be built.
- A youth group in Malawi inspires the community with a drama on the need to accept and care for people with AIDS.
- Children in Nicaragua paint bright murals on the walls in their schools and parks to encourage people and to teach important messages.
- A youth choir sings songs that inspire hope and healing in a refugee camp in Kenya.

tioned worrying about the environment, violence/war, poverty and world hunger.

Public schools recognize and address their students' greater global awareness. Many schools provide opportunities for individual students to pursue their global interests through clubs (e.g., a UN club), for entire student bodies to learn more about issues through assemblies with a special focus (e.g., extinct animals, human rights), and for students and teachers to develop skills in being together in an inclusive and co-operative learning community through programs like TRIBES (Jeanne Gibbs, CenterSource Systems, California, 1995).

"If we wish to create a lasting peace we must begin with the children."

— Mahatma Gandhi

With global media coverage and increased world migration, global issues are in our homes, in our schools and workplaces, and in our communities. But to what extent do our churches recognize and address the changes? We often talk about how to make our church life and worship services more youth friendly. Perhaps one way might be to throw our church doors wide open to the global context of our diverse communities, and have our church lives embrace both the richness of the diversity and the struggles for faithful living that are part of it. When young people find their daily experiences and global concerns are welcome in our churches, then they might be able to start making connections between their 21st century lives and the Christian faith. R

Anne Saunders is a free-lance writer and editor whose work has included the development of educational resources for the *Whole People of God* and *Bible Quest* curriculums and mission resources for The Presbyterian Church in Canada. She is a member of the International Affairs Committee and Guildwood Community Presbyterian Church in Toronto.

Questions to ask

- To what extent is your church aware of and involved in global issues?
- How does the weekly worship service reflect the increasing diversity and global connections of Canadian society? (e.g. music, sermon, children's time, prayers)
- How do your bulletin boards, literature racks, library, newsletters and announcements reflect your church's interest in global issues?
- How are connections made between global issues and faith?
- Are special days of global significance observed (e.g., Earth Day, Refugee Day, World Food Day, World AIDS Day)? Are days of the Christian Year (e.g., Epiphany and Pentecost) connected with global themes?
- To what extent is the inclusion of global social justice issues a factor in the selection of Christian education curriculum?
- How do church programs provide leadership in education and action on global issues (e.g., a "care of creation" policy)?
- How does your church's mission statement reflect a call to witness in a global context?

Actions to take

- Promote dialogue with diverse people — arrange tours locally (e.g., a refugee shelter, visits to other faith groups), encourage participation in international tours, invite guests involved in global issues.
- Invite Presbyterian youth with global experience to meet with your youth, address your leaders, plan worship (e.g., International Ministries volunteers, Youth in Mission study tour participants). For names, contact: mission interpretation co-ordinator at 1-800-619-7301.
- Organize joint events with ethnic churches and organizations, and social justice groups.
- Encourage leaders to use resources that connect with global issues: World Council of Churches studies; our church's mission studies for children, youth and adults; reports and resources produced by the International Affairs Committee and Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D).
- Research these subjects: child labour, child slavery, child prostitution, child soldiers, street children, environment, HIV/AIDS, malaria, hunger, refugees.
- Obtain, or access on the Internet, educational resources for young people from: Ten Days for Global Justice, UNICEF, UNHCR, Free the Children International.

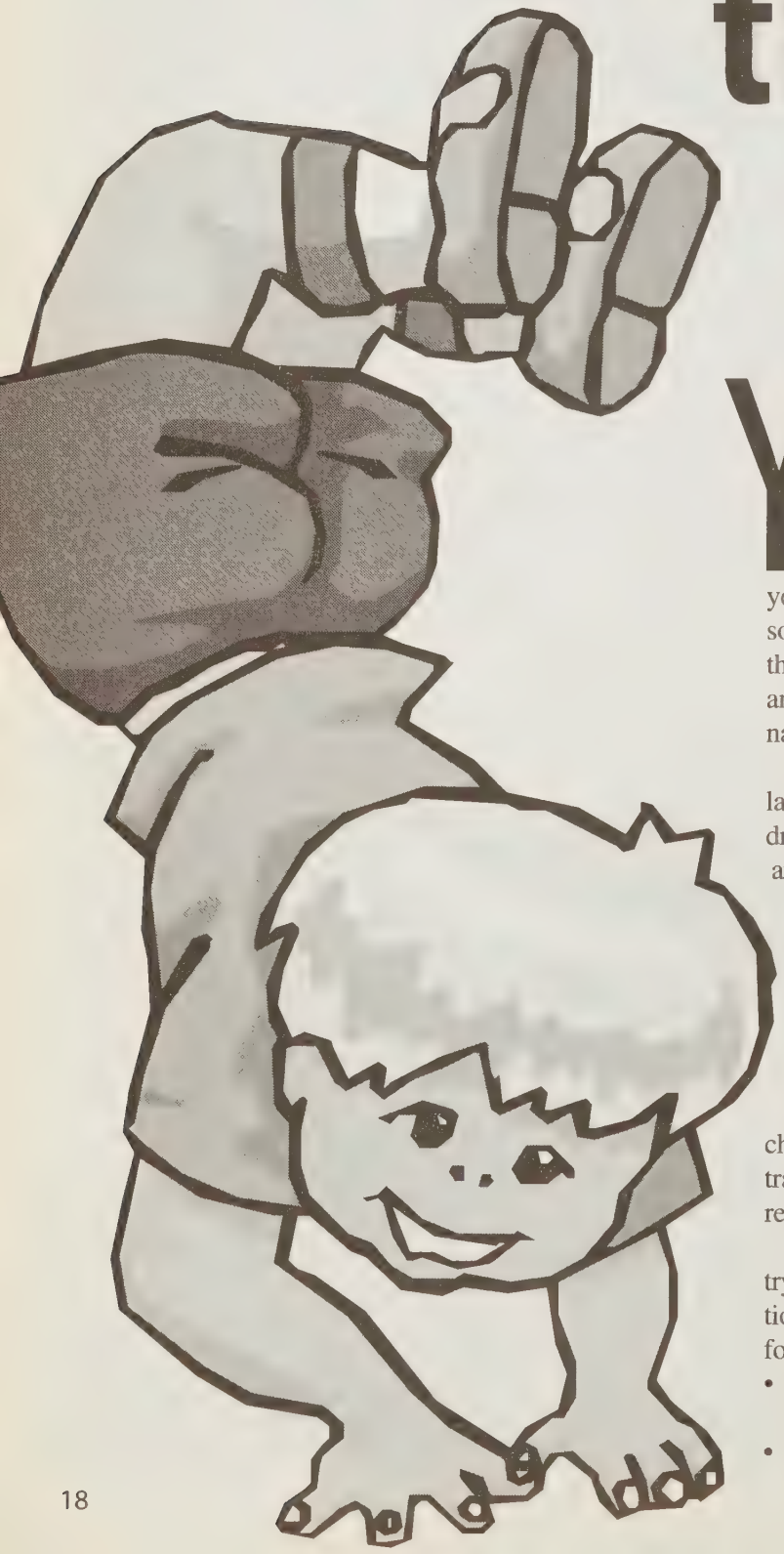
Ideas to try

- Connect current news headlines with biblical stories like the Israelite enslavement (Exodus 3:7-10), the massacre of the infants (Matthew 2:16-18), the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Identify the Israelites, infants, Samaritan today. Who are the pharaohs, the Herods, the thieves? Include environmental issues in discussions. How do we respond to bring about God's shalom?
- Read dramatically Dr. Seuss books or view the videos (e.g. *Horton Hears a Who, The Butter-Battle Book, The Lorax, The Sneetches*). Talk about the themes like justice and peacemaking.



Photo: Karen Watts Plater, PWS&D — India

Catch that kid!



by Margaret Brouillette

Miniature powerhouses need our help, not our despair

You know you're in trouble when the battle-scarred teacher of the junior high boys class moans: "I can't keep up with that kid. I'm getting too old for this kind of thing!" The teacher is only 28.

Then, the dear saint who has been teaching Grade 3s for 40 years refuses to come back next year if she's going to get so-and-so's little sister. One assumes that either the little sister has made the headlines in the church bulletin more than once, or that so-and-so has done such-and-such to the point that Mrs. What's-her-name feels as if she's starting to lose her you-know-what.

Who are these kids — the miniature powerhouses that defy the laws of discipline, social savvy and, often, gravity to the point of driving Sunday school teachers to prayer or despair? More important, for our two harried volunteers, can anything be done to teach the Word of God to a child in flight? (That is, other than using a blow-dart packed with tranquillizer.)

My guess is that so-and-so, his little sister and the junior high boy who are causing all the commotion have been diagnosed as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADHD. This is not a disease and, therefore, there is no cure. It means the brain is wired differently. A child with ADHD is characterized by a short attention span, impulsive behaviour, distractibility and constant motion. His emotions are intense and his reactions are immediate.

Keeping in mind that the children who spend so much energy trying to create a circus around them are really the ones who function best with structure and routine, the "experts" recommend the following:

- Eliminate distractions in the class, e.g., loud music, bright lights, food, candy or dangerous objects in accessible places.
- Be clear about your expectations. Guidelines for acceptable

behaviour should be reviewed and posted on the wall.

- React immediately to good or bad behaviour in a predetermined way, with as little talking as possible.
- Do not argue.
- Do not let other children label this child as "bad."
- Be generous with praise.
- Supervise transition times.
- Develop a signal, such as a light tap on the shoulder, to bring a child back from her interplanetary travels.
- Find excuses to let this child move — passing out papers, miming the story, taking the offering to the superintendent, placing extra chairs for visitors.
- Give instructions simply, one at a time. Allow children to repeat them or explain them to their neighbours to make sure they understand.
- Vary your teaching methods. Involve the students. If you can capture the attention of ADHD children and guide their discovery, you have almost certainly succeeded with the rest of the class.
- Ask the parents for suggestions. Teamwork is important.
- Pray that God will help you love the special kid in your class.

If these special kids are functioning poorly in Sunday school, chances are they are a challenge for their parents to handle, they have burned a few babysitters and Grandma refuses to take them for the weekend. Their teachers complain about them, and they have a hard time making or keeping friends. They are due for some kudos, some genuine affection and some success.

Remember that Jesus loves these children. The Heavenly Father knit them together in their mother's wombs and has a special plan for each life. God has given gifts to them, too. He has given them families. And, now, God has given them a Sunday school teacher. Enjoy this opportunity to laugh and learn together.

Oh, and one last word to the wise: if you do find some of those blow-darts, never let them fall into the hands of a hyperactive kid! R

Margaret Brouillette is a mother, a public school religious education teacher and a Sunday school director in Saint Luc, Que. Her first book, *Famous Jerks of the Bible,* is due to be released in the summer.

Medical Student Elective in Nicaragua

Attention: medical students who are active members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

International Ministries is offering two opportunities for medical students to take an elective in Nicaragua. The emphasis is on primary care in the community, in Managua and on the Atlantic Coast near Bluefields. There may also be hospital placements in emergency, pediatrics and obstetrics.

Successful applicants will receive a grant of $1,000 towards travel costs. Facility in Spanish is desirable but not a prerequisite.

For further information, contact:
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There is wonderful, new music in several small southwestern Ontario churches coming from old, discarded pipe organs

Piplng up



Sandy McTavish makes music at home.

Lovingly restored piece by piece — felts replaced, ivories polished, bellows rebuilt, new parts sometimes delicately fashioned — the sounds of century-old instruments can be heard again, thanks to the efforts of H. A. (Sandy) and Joanne McTavish. They live and work in a modern home close to his birthplace, a bit north of the pleasant Perth County town of Milverton and a few kilometres west of the Kitchener-Waterloo twin cities.

"I like to take something that is not workable and in disrepair and get it back in first-class order," Sandy says, referring to the parts of old musical instruments he has taken from garages and old church buildings. When not working on the pipe organs, the retired couple can be found in a workshop behind their home — hands and, maybe, clothes covered with grease and old oil, bringing back to life an old automobile engine. It could end up as far away as Australia, lending authenticity to a valuable, restored, antique passenger vehicle. (The couple has restored an antique passenger vehicle every year for 12 years, a venture that supports their goodwill organ projects.)

"Someone had to do it," says Sandy, referring to a 10-rank R. S. Williams tracker organ built in Toronto in 1896 for a Presbyterian church in Simcoe, Ontario. It later went to a now-replaced Presbyterian church in Port Dover. After the new church was built there, the pieces of the magnificent organ sat in a garage for 30 years before the skilled hands and talents of Sandy and Joanne gave its voice back to it, lavishing on it the devotion and promise it deserved. "When I saw it in the garage, I knew someone had to do it, even though some of the larger pipes had been flattened."

"There is great satisfaction in hearing something play that hasn't made a sound

on behalf of old organs

by Ivor Williams

in years," they agree. Magnificent notes now come from the huge instrument in a specially created addition to their home. The pipes that are visible soar from the lower level up to the living room and even higher, almost to the ceiling more than seven metres above. It occupies an area of 1.25 square metres. Move behind the instrument, and most of the 580 pipes can be seen. They are capable of producing 558 notes if the big wooden handle has pumped some air into the massive bellows. Beside the bellows handle, some choirboy sketched an old, wood-burning locomotive onto the clear wood many years ago.

The notes of the organ fill the room as Sandy's big work-worn hands caress the keys. "I took a few piano lessons when I was a kid," he says, "but didn't like it." But he has recently completed a year as organist for Burns Presbyterian Church in Milverton. "I can play 90 per cent of the hymns in the old book by ear." And in any key.

Sandy is an elder at Burns Church and is always helpful and supportive, says Gunar Kravalis, a former minister. He volunteers as supply organist whenever needed and is especially fond of the old hymns in the old *Book of Praise*. He is a consistent volunteer for services at local nursing homes, and his ideas for things to do in the worship service are always welcome, says his former minister.

Late last year, the couple's most recent restoration project, another rebuilt Edward Lye "tracker" (totally mechanical) instrument, began leading the congregation at the near-perfectly acoustic North Mornington Presbyterian Church, not far from the McTavish homestead and part of the two-point Milverton church charge. This organ came from an Anglican church in the eastern Ontario village of Hastings when the congregation opted for an electronic instrument. Sandy and Joanne disassembled it there and brought it back to their Milverton home. A couple years ago, most of it was scattered about the lower level work area of the McTavish home. Felts and leathers were replaced, the wooden levers gently polished and the bellows remade. A pool table served as a workplace. "If it isn't a tracker, it isn't really an organ," says Sandy.

It's a lot of work, but it has a sound all to itself — the instrument not ruined even by cold, weather and neglect. Organ lovers like the McTavishes all over North America are intent on saving the old instruments. They are tracked down in small country churches and in huge city buildings.

"I like to take something that is not workable and in disrepair and get it back in first-class order"

Like many rural churches, the North Mornington congregation has grown smaller but continues its witness in an area that has lost many of its Presbyterian farm families. At a music night in the church, the newly restored organ highlighted the event. Presbyterians and others in the know who were aware of the organ's restoration crowded into the old sanctuary.

Sandy picked up a lovely old instrument, removed years ago from a Lutheran church in Zurich, Ontario, that had been a fixture in a friend's cottage near the Lake Huron resort town of Grand Bend. They took it apart and totally restored it. It is now leading services in the small Presbyterian church at Gordonville, part of the two-point Arthur charge northwest of Toronto.

In the hamlet of Ker, part of a three-point United Church charge near Stoney Creek, an organ lay neglected for more than 30 years, deemed unworthy of repairing. After Sandy and Joanne made several journeys between Milverton and Ker, that instrument is now an integral part of worship services there. When it was reinstalled, guest organist Paul Beevor of Listowel played to a capacity crowd.

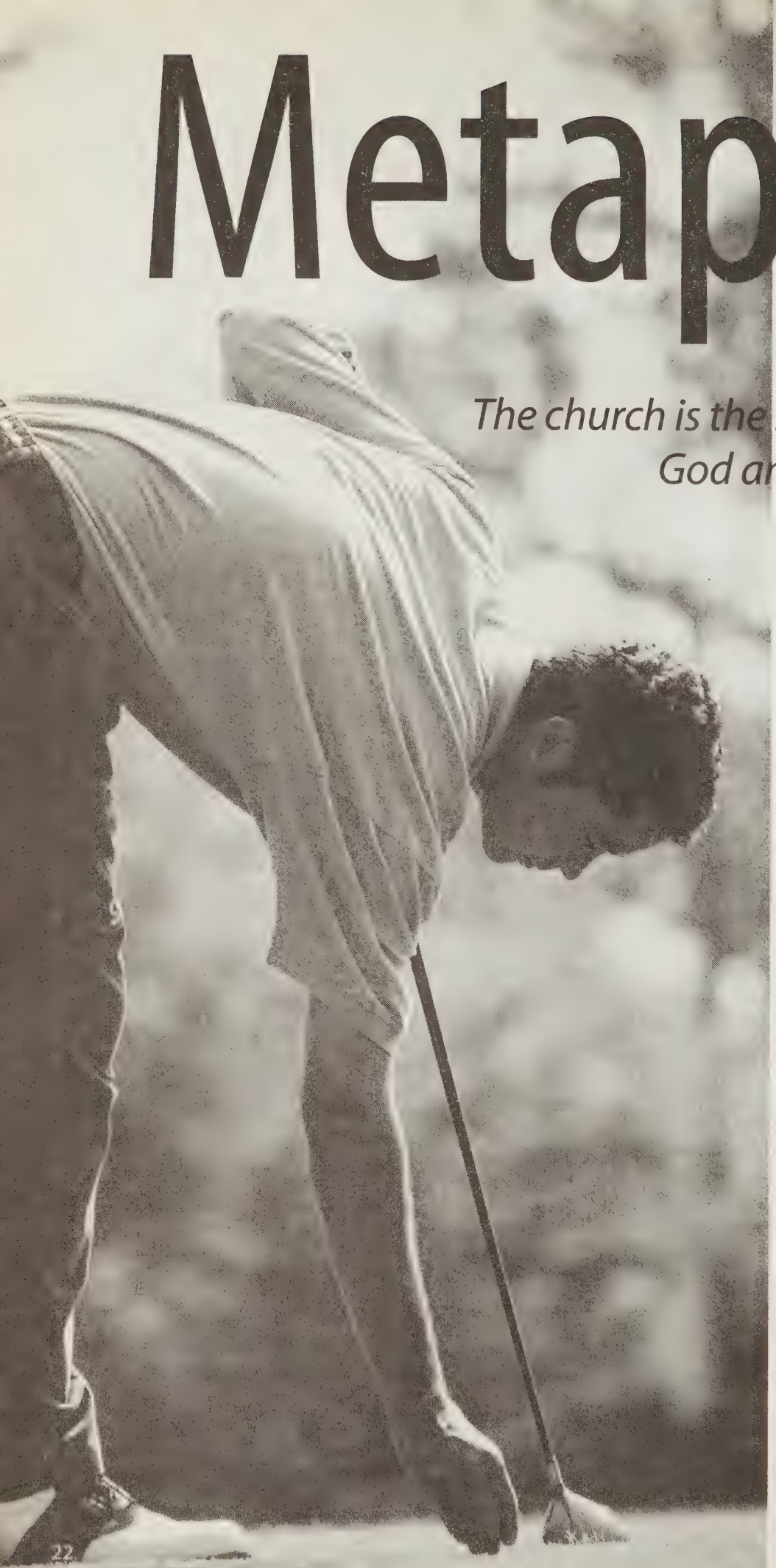
"Many little churches have low budgets and can't afford the restoration costs," muses Sandy. "So our work is done on a volunteer basis." He and Joanne have worked on a half-dozen instruments in their area, and also spent a couple of days at work on the organ in the Anglican church in Walkerton, Ontario.

A lot of music echoes through the McTavishes' comfortable brick home when visitors and friends gather to play and hear the instruments there. (The bricks for the home were once part of the wall around the historic county jail in London, 100 kilometres south of Milverton.) The McTavishes have two organs and a piano in the living room and a former Salvation Army band clarinet that Sandy found at a Tavistock auction. Its history can be traced back over three long lifetimes to when it was played in a Sally Ann band in England.

Many small churches in southwestern Ontario are alive again with the sound of organ music, thanks to the tender care of Sandy, a retired Bell Telephone employee, and Joanne, Presbyterians from Milverton, Ontario. R

Ivor Williams is a member of Westmount Church in London, Ont., and a contributing editor to this magazine.

Metaphor



The church is the missing link between God and the course we play

by David Jones

On the East Coast shores of Scotland, the rocky, wind-swept soil that "links" the sea with the more arable, fertile land used for farming is known as "Linksland." "Links" soil was not suitable for farming and, thus, became the obvious place to play golf. And because of the location (touching the sea and shouldering the farm), "Links" courses tend to have more undulation, more blind spots, harder greens and more sand than any other kind of course. The grass is coarser and harder to cut through. Bunkers have sharper sides where the wind often swirls. Less irrigation is used and the drainage is fast. Most people believe players need a wider range of shots to play a Links course. And because legend has it that golf was invented by a Scottish shepherd casually swinging his stick to hit stones into rabbit holes, a Links course is thought to be closer to the origin of the game.

The use of the term Links can also refer to the way the course is laid out. All nine of the holes on the front nine line up in a row, then the back nine head back toward the clubhouse as if all are linked. This is the way the holes are laid out at "The Old Course" of the Ancient and Royal Golf Club of St. Andrew's, the generally recognized birthplace of golf. This is also why the front nine are often referred to as the "outward nine" and the back nine as the "inward nine."

With this in mind, I want to suggest a metaphor. On one side of The Old Course (the church) is the sea (God), and on the other side is the farm (the place where people laugh and love and earn their living).

The sea, of course, is deep and wide and beyond our ability to fathom. It is, at times, brooding while, at other times, it is bright. At times, it is unfathomable but it never is unfaithful. So one can easily rely upon the ocean's rhythms, setting the clock to the turning of the tide and seeing in the sunset a benediction on the day. We can experience the sea with every one of our senses: the sound of waves lapping against the pebble shore, the smell of seaweed and the taste of salt, the mist that makes us wet and the bright blue hues as though they've fallen from the sky. Likewise, in every way and with all our senses, we can experience the ocean (God). It is simply a matter of allowing ourselves the freedom to hear, to feel and to smell that we might "taste and see that the Lord is good" and, so, believe in God's abundance.

On the other side, however, is the farm. It is an earthy place, an understandable place. It is almost always dirty, where things need to be done. It is a place of routine: of morning, noon and night, "as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how" (Mark 4:26-27). Yet, it is also the place of laughter and tears, of growing in years. It is where we do the most important things in life: fall in love, raise our families, make our friends and try to feel fulfilled. The farm is where the money is made and the bills are paid. It is where we build schools, hospitals and nursing homes. It is where we watch football and look forward to Friday and ... *and wonder about our faith!* It is on the farm that we wonder about what we believe and it is there where we sometimes think we ought to do something about it. It is on the farm that people turn to the sea and say to themselves, "I wonder what that ocean is all about?"

In between the ocean and the farm is The Old Course (the church). It has been around so long it's easy to take for granted. It also somehow seems élitist: the club ties, the ancient traditions and the buildings are more beautiful than those we find on the farm. Still, with all its faults, it remains the "link" because it is (by design!) situated between an unfathomable, faithful God and that place where people laugh and love and earn their living. No doubt, this is why The Old Course is so perfectly suited to bridge the gap between the farm and the ocean, between the ocean and the farm.

The Old Course (the church) is not suitable for anything else, of course, and, thus, becomes the obvious place to practise one's faith. And, because of its location (touching the sea and shouldering the farm), The Old Course tends to have more undulation (ups and downs), more blind spots (short-sightedness and bad thinking), harder greens (harder heads) and more sand (quicksand!) than any other course. The grass is coarser and harder to cut through (bureaucracy). Bunkers have sharper sides where the wind often swirls (committee meetings). Less irrigation is used and the drainage is fast (if members are not fed, they're quick to come and go). Most people believe one needs a wider range of shots to play a Links course than any other course (ask any minister!). And because legend has it that golf was invented by a Scottish shepherd (a Jewish carpenter) casually swinging his stick (telling stories and preaching sermons) to hit stones into rabbit holes (to usher in the Kingdom), a Links course (the church) is thought to be closer to the origin of the game.

The use of the term "links" can refer to the way the course (the church) is laid out. All nine of the holes (every congregation) on the front nine line up in a row, then the back nine (every denomination) head back toward the clubhouse as if they were all linked. This is the way the holes are laid out at The Old Course (the church) of the Ancient and Royal Golf Club of St. Andrew's, the generally recognized birthplace of golf (of faith). This is also why the front nine are often referred to as the "outward nine" and the back nine as the "inward nine." The front nine head out, away from the clubhouse, and the back nine turn back toward the clubhouse (as the church sends us out into the world in service and welcomes us home each week for worship). R

The front nine head out, away from the clubhouse, and the back nine turn back toward the clubhouse (as the church sends us out into the world in service and welcomes us home each week for worship)

David Jones is minister of First Church, Brockville, Ont.

Yeats' dancer

I like your dance.
I like to watch you do it,
graceful as fingers,
the toss of your head,
the low organ-chord of your
transcendence,
the rise, ripple & fall
of your possession,
the crackle of the interface
where Yeats' dancer
transforms
into Dance.

Your grace is
the single best reason I know
for believing
in the existence
of a benevolent God.

— William John Watkins

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Wellington Square United Church

Burlington, Ontario

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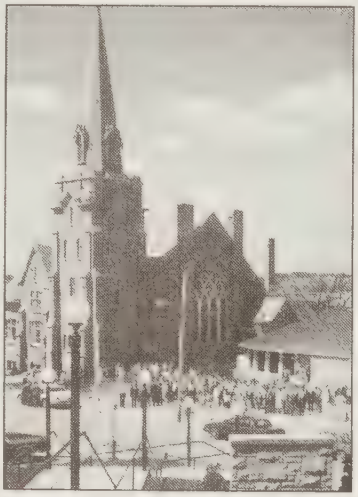
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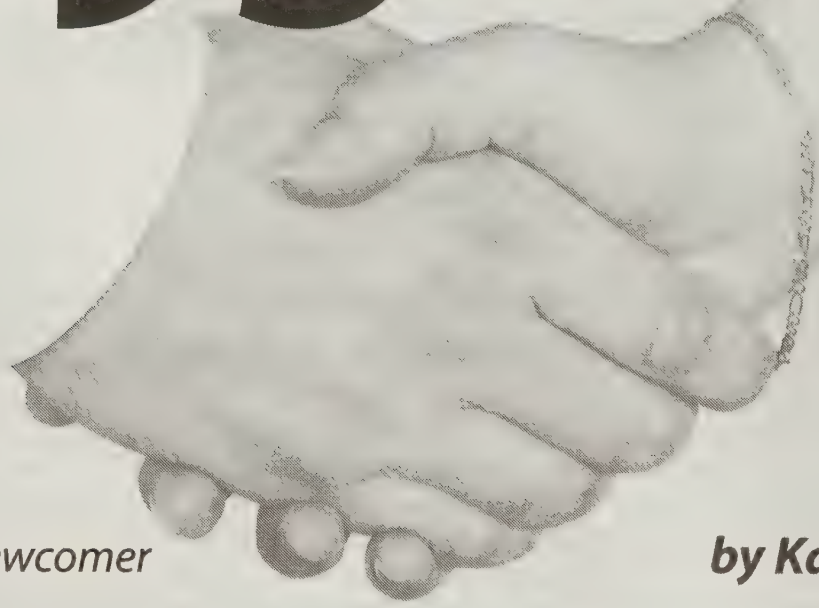
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The 95 factor



Making your congregation more welcoming for the newcomer

by Kathy Cawsey

The doorbell rang insistently. At 10:30 a.m. On a Sunday. I ignored it.

It rang again.

I muttered about the people in my apartment building who consistently forget their keys, considered ignoring the ringing some more, then hauled myself out of bed and stumbled to the intercom buzzer.

"Is this Kathy?" a voice asked, too cheerful for first thing on a Sunday morning.

"Yes ... "

"Are you going to church this morning?"

Pause. Utter confusion. I know all of three people in this city, none of whom attend church. "I beg your pardon?"

"I'm from Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church. Frank Sellars, the minister there, asked me to stop by and pick you up so you can find your way and don't have to walk in all alone."

I was impressed. I was very impressed. I would have been even more impressed had he called the night before, but never mind. I decided against attending church in my pyjamas but promised I would go the following week.

There's nothing like 95 per cent welcome and 5 per cent guilt to get you to go to church.

It's hard for newcomers in a city to find a church in which they feel at home and welcome. Often, the only method is to pick churches at random and try them out week by week until one feels comfortable. A congregation, then, has one chance, and one chance only, to make a newcomer welcome.

I've had some bad experiences in looking for new churches. When my family went to New Zealand, there was a Presbyterian church near to where we lived. People were friendly, but we were shocked to hear about the European (read, "white") picnic that afternoon, which would be followed by the Maori, Samoan and Tahitian picnic. We didn't return.

The second church we tried had no one under the age of 60 and, other than the minister, only one man in the congregation — my father. No one spoke to us or greeted us. We didn't return there either.

We finally ended up at an Anglican church that a friend recommended to us. The first day we went was Easter Sunday. The minister told a children's story (there were lots of kids — a good sign) using a chocolate egg with chicks inside. But he hadn't thought about how to get the egg open, so he karate-chopped it. Chocolate and chicks went flying. We decided then and there that this church was for us: a minister that relaxed, that unflappable and that good with kids could probably handle any situation. Ten years later, we are still friends with some of the people from that congregation.

So what makes a church welcoming? Here are a few suggestions:

Have a system — better yet, have several, since some people are more comfortable with one than with another — by which newcomers can make themselves known. A guest-book, cards to be placed in the offering plate and sign-in books are some ideas I've seen. At the church here in Dublin, Ireland, the minister wanders around to chat with people before the service. This provides both a good feeling of community for regular members (which newcomers will see) and gives the minister an opportunity to spot new people before they slip out after the service.

Most important, however, whatever system you choose, *make sure you follow up on it.* Call the person that week. Invite

the newcomer to activities and events. The first two weeks in a new town are the loneliest weeks in a person's life. If you can make a person feel welcome during those two weeks, you will help people more than you know.

Indeed, it is better to have no system at all than one that is never followed up. One church I went to as a summer student in Toronto had books passed along each pew, in which every person wrote down name, address and phone number. The idea was that everyone in the congregation should take part in this exercise so newcomers wouldn't feel singled out or uncomfortable. I was impressed — until no one contacted me. I never heard back from anyone. The whole system was pointless. I went to a different church.

Designate people as welcomers — people specifically chosen to keep an eye out for newcomers each week. The first point of contact is the greeter at the door. Try to choose people who might spot new faces and, if they do meet someone new, have them take down the name and let the minister know.

After the service, delegate individuals to search out newcomers. Research indicates the first few minutes following the benediction may be the most critical time for people experiencing your congregation for the first time. Ensure these people cover a broad age-range. While one of the best things about church is getting to know people of other generations, we feel more comfortable when we first come if we are welcomed by someone our own age. During the first few weeks of school, especially, have university-age people keeping an eye out for new students. New students are lonely and timid, and there is nothing better than a friendly face inviting them along for a get-together or a coffee.

One problem, though, with this system is that it occasionally gives rise to embarrassing mistakes when long-term members are greeted with the question, "Are you new?" One way to avoid this is to say, instead, "I don't believe we've met." Although this, too, can backfire. My mother, not a natural extrovert, was doing her best to be welcoming once, and said to a couple standing alone and looking uncomfortable, "I don't believe we've met."

"Yes we have," the woman answered shortly. She didn't bother to reintroduce herself even though my mother had obviously forgotten!

Make contact with the newcomer. Appoint someone (perhaps the minister) whom members of the congregation can contact if they know of someone new. As the church here in Dublin did, arrange for someone to give the newcomer a lift or to walk with the person to church, so he or she doesn't have to walk in and sit alone. Call the newcomer even if he or she hasn't yet come on a Sunday. When I finally did make it to church here and introduced myself to the minister, he knew exactly who I was. He invited me to a young people's group and introduced me to some other Canadians. I will definitely be going back.

There's nothing like 95 per cent welcome and 5 per cent guilt to get you to go to church

Provide a forum after the service where people can meet — a coffee hour or whatever. Always mention it during the announcements and always emphasize how welcome newcomers are to the church. Regulars might get sick of hearing this, but newcomers won't know you say it every week.

Ensure the order of service is clear and detailed. If something is not included in the bulletin (the Lord's Prayer, for example, or the Apostles' Creed), mention where it can be found in the hymn-book. If there might be confusion over versions (sins vs. debts vs. trespasses), indicate which will be used. *Never* have responses that are not printed. Nothing makes a person feel more confused or out of place. As well, play an entire verse of a hymn on the organ/piano before singing. For people who cannot read music, this is essential. If the church building is large, post signs clearly indicating Sunday school rooms, fellowship hall and washrooms.

Deliberately sit next to someone who is alone in a pew. As Canadian Presbyterians, we are often reticent to invade someone's privacy; but sitting alone makes a newcomer feel isolated and unwelcome. That was the only thing the church here did wrong. I sat alone throughout the service, even though every other pew around me was filled with members of the congregation.

Get the newcomer involved in the life of the church — as rapidly as possible. Nothing makes people feel as though they belong more than being able to contribute. It's a bit of a fine line to walk — we don't want to make newcomers feel they are welcome only because we're desperate to find someone to teach the sixth grade Sunday school class. But err on the side of inviting them to join too many things rather than erring on the side of not inviting them to enough.

Meet newcomers outside formally planned activities. If a new family with young children attends, ask a kid who has met them in Sunday school to invite them over. If a teenager or university-age young person comes, ask an extroverted youth of the same age to take the newcomer out for coffee, to show him the city or to bring her along to the youth group. If single, older people appear, introduce them to other similar people. If they are new in town, find out how they are adjusting, if there is anything they haven't found yet, or if there is anything with which someone in the congregation could help them.

First impressions are crucial. If a church wishes to attract new members, it needs to get things right the first time. More important, however, a friendly congregation can play a crucial role in easing a person's adjustment to a new school, new town or new country. Whenever you move to a new place, you need to form a new community and new support network there. What a delight to step into one that is ready-made and welcoming. R

Kathy Cawsey, a member of Knox Church, Waterloo, Ont., is studying for her doctorate at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland.

FANNING THE FLAMES

The Presbyterian Church in Canada in the 21st Century

What are the FLAMES?

In 1997 Presbyterians from all across the nation raised their voices and offered to the General Assembly their hopes and dreams for a vital and spirit-filled church in the twenty-first century. In the joyful shout of those voices the General Assembly heard six priorities offered up again and again from Presbyterians of all ages and in all provinces. The six priorities were set out to spell the acronym FLAMES, and in 1998 the General Assembly adopted the FLAMES initiative as a means to lead our church boldly and confidently into the twenty first century. The FLAMES acronym stands for:

F ocus on children, teens and young adults

L aity equipping

A ctive evangelism

M ission: national, international and justice

E ducation for laity and clergy

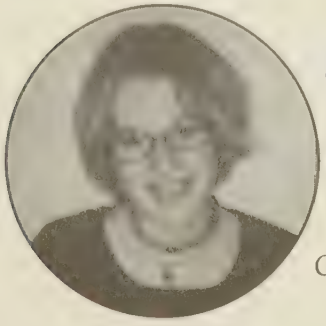
S pirituality

The FLAMES Priority for 2000 - 2001 is "Focus on children, teens and young adults"

Here are just two examples of the countless children, teens and young adults who have grown up enjoying the benefits of the Presbyterian Church and have gone on to make great contributions to society. We hope that you will be inspired by these two stories and put new effort into youth ministry in your church.



Adele Halliday grew up in the Presbyterian Church and enjoyed Sunday school, youth group and other church activities. But it was the Presbyterian Youth Triennium in 1995 that gave her a new hunger for faith. Adele has been involved with the Presbyterian Young People's Society (PYPS), and has worked for the church in Nicaragua, Belize, Zimbabwe and Kenya. Adele has worked as a Christian education coordinator and is now a high school teacher. She will soon take up new work with World Vision as the resource coordinator in global education. Adele says, "The church has helped shape the person I have become."

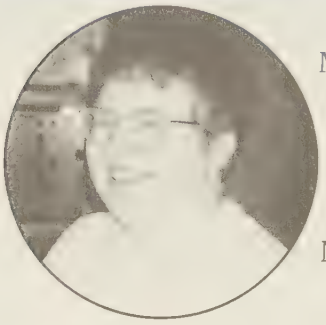


Jen Geddes grew up in the Presbyterian Church and enjoyed all the benefits of the local congregation as well as some great experiences at Camp Kintail and the Presbyterian Music Camp. Like Adele, Jen found great strength in the PYPS, and credits her synod youth consultant with bringing her closer to God. She cites "Summer Experience '99" and "Canada Youth 2000" as turning points in her life. Jen is now busy working with Laurier University's Christian Fellowship and the Canadian Council of Churches.

The FLAMES Song-writing Contest

In 1999, the Long-Range Planning Committee introduced the FLAMES song-writing contest. The contest inspired many Presbyterian musicians and songwriters. The six winning entries are noted below.

Winner - Overall - Minda Paisley - "Pillar of Fire! Flame in the Night!"



Minda may have had a little head start over some of the other competitors. She has been studying music since the age of four! Minda has been singing in church choirs since she was seventeen and has been writing music for fifteen years. She has written music for several church anniversaries and other special events. Minda earned a B.A. in Bible philosophy from Sterling College in Kansas and studied for a year at Princeton. For the past fourteen years Minda has lived in Kincardine, Ontario.

Winner - Senior's Division - Jack Brown - "Hymn to Flames"



Jack was born and educated in Glasgow, Scotland. After university he served three years in the RAF before emigrating to Canada where he joined a bank and eventually served as an internal auditor and manager. Jack also has extensive musical experience. He has been singing in choirs since High School, and has sung in church choirs in Scotland and Canada, and the Bach-Elgar Choir in Hamilton, Ontario. Jack is a choir member and soloist at MacNab Street Church in Hamilton, and is also active in many other aspects of church life.

Winner - Contemporary Praise and Worship - Heather Morton - "Breathe on me with your Breath of Fire"



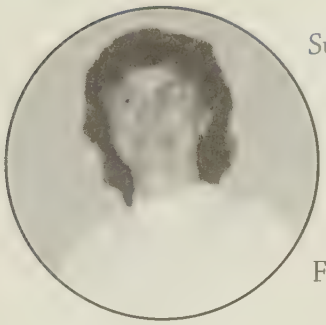
Music flows like a river in Heather's family! Her grandparents were singers, her mom is a singer, and at one point her mother, brother, sister, aunt, uncle and three cousins all sang in the same church choir! She has shared her music with the WMS, Sunday school, youth programs and Vacation Bible School. Heather's first effort at song writing was for a video on crime prevention for the Chatham Police Department. Since January of 2000, Heather has been organist and choir director at Glencoe Presbyterian Church, Glencoe, Ontario.

Winner - Words only Division - Walter Inglis - "Millenium Hymn"



Is it just a coincidence? Like Jack Brown above, Walter was born in Glasgow and served in the RAF! Perhaps that clean Glasgow air inspires musical greatness. Walter served as an elder in the Church of Scotland before emigrating to Canada. He was ordained an elder at First Presbyterian Church, Pembroke, Ontario in 1959 and has been serving faithfully ever since. In 2000, Walter's hymn was sung at St. Andrew's Church, Blairgowrie, Scotland as part of a "twinning" project with First Church, Pembroke.

Winner - Song for Children's Choir - *Suzanne McIntosh* - "Hold Your Flame Up" Hymn



Suzanne shares her winning effort with the Sunday school children she teaches in Kenora, Ontario. She says that many of the ideas and lyrics for "Hold Your Flame Up" came from the children. Suzanne has been a member of the Presbyterian Church since she was a baby. She was baptized in Brantford and grew up in First Church Kenora where she moved through the junior choir and senior choir, and eventually took over from her dad as director of the senior choir. While studying for her music degree in Brandon, Manitoba, she belonged to the choir of First Church in that community.

Winner - Song for Teens Division - *Sarah C. Murray* (Words and Music)



Sarah is an occupational health nurse in St. Catharines, Ontario. A few years ago Sarah came back to St. Andrew's, St. Catharines, the church which she attended as a teenager. She has since joined the choir. Sarah has been writing poetry since her teen years and up until recently poetry has been the means by which she has expressed her faith. But with the help of Eleanor Lawrie, a fellow member of St. Andrew's, Sarah has been able to put her poetry to music. "Fan the Flame" is one of the resulting songs.

Eleanor Lawrie (Arrangement) - "Fan the Flame"



Eleanor has studied piano and flute from a young age, and has performed as a flutist in Toronto, Hamilton and St. Catharines. In 1976 Eleanor moved to St. Catharines and became Principal Flute for the Niagara Symphony. She is an Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto (ARCT) in both flute and recorder. Eleanor has been a member of the Presbyterian Church for ten years, most recently as a member of St. Andrew's, St. Catharines.

Introducing a new *FLAMES* contest

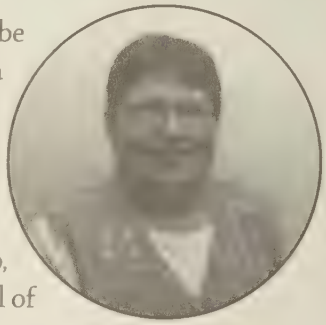
Who Fanned Your *FLAMES*?

We want you to send us your story about someone who had a great and positive influence on your journey of faith. We want to understand how the gospel is transmitted from one person to another. Your story should emphasize the traits of character, the actions and the faith of the person who had an influence on you. The best stories will be compiled and distributed as an inspiration to all people who want to share their faith but are not sure how it is done. Perhaps your story will open our eyes to new ideas about sharing faith. Perhaps your story will guide and direct others as they seek to live a joyful life in Christ. Your story about someone who had a great influence on your faith should be no more than 750 words. Please send your story to the address below before October 31, 2001.

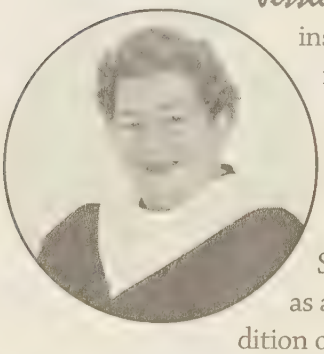
Please send to - Who Fanned Your *FLAMES*?
@ Long Range Planning
The Presbyterian Church in Canada,
50 Wynford Drive,
Toronto, Ontario
M3C-1J7

The FLAMES Priority for 2001 - 2002 is "LAITY EQUIPPING"

What is an "equipped lay person"? We can only start to answer this question. There are so many ways to be equipped for the Lord's service. During the Year of Laity Equipping we will hear all kinds of wonderful stories about faithful lay persons joyfully serving the church. Here are a few examples of well equipped lay people who will inspire you to find new ways to serve God.

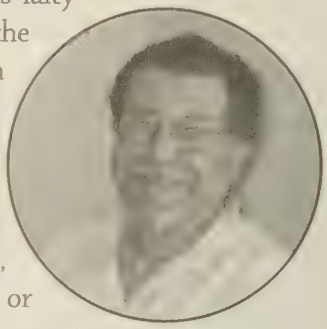


Gayle Ewin became involved in the church in her mid 30's when she wanted her children to be involved in Sunday school. In the 1980's Gayle moved to Grande Prairie, Alberta and felt a deeper sense of calling to ministry. She became involved with the Ladies' Group, as a ruling elder, and as a member of the Assembly Council. She has also worked for the food bank of the local Salvation Army. Gayle says, "Teaching elders need to encourage people to do ministry. If people are not challenged to do their best, they will fall short." Gayle has found great personal satisfaction and fulfillment in all she has done for Christ. When asked what lay people can so, Gayle responds, "There is no limit to what lay people can accomplish in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world."



Jessie Johnson has known and served the Lord from her earliest years and has set an example to inspire all lay people. She was the first female elder at St. Andrew's, Pictou, Nova Scotia, and the first lay moderator and female moderator of the presbytery of Pictou. She has also worked as a teacher, choir member, lay preacher, ecumenist, advocate and rabble-rouser! Jessie has worked with enthusiasm in the Atlantic Mission Society and has been commissioned to represent every level of church government. She has chaired the education committee of the Pictou County Council of Churches for many years. As a lay preacher she is often in the pulpit for 50 Sundays of the year! In spite of her work in so many ministries, Jessie thinks of herself firstly as a pastoral visitor. In the spring of 2001, Jessie's daughter, Gail, will be ordained and a great tradition of ministry will continue.

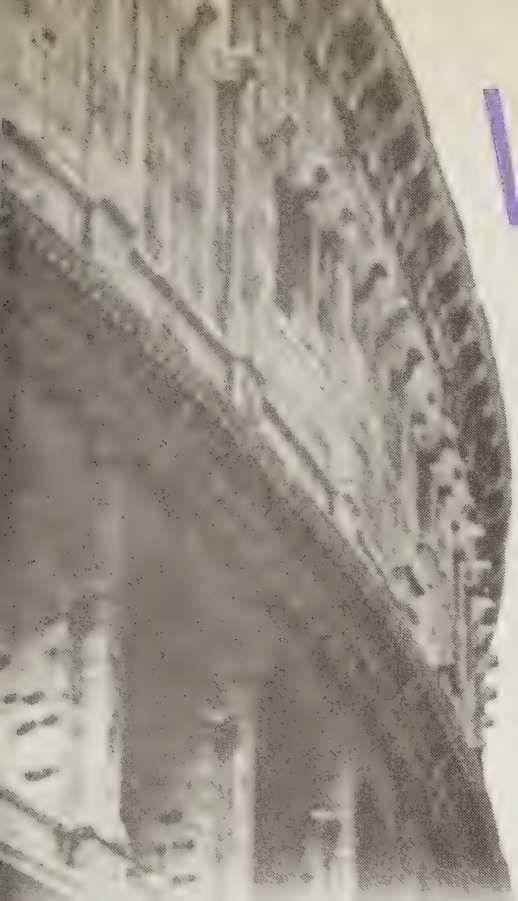
Laity Coordinator Appointed



The Life and Mission Agency has appointed Dwight Browns of New Westminster, B.C. as laity coordinator for the next year. As the name implies, it will be the task of Mr. Browns to blend the elements of laity equipping as found within the various departments of the Life and Mission Agency. He will encourage participation, by the whole people of God, in the mission of Jesus Christ. He will also emphasize the church's biblical calling to invite, equip and send out disciples, for a life of Christian service.

Several new resources will be produced and a number of events planned with a specific focus on equipping laity. Among those events are our involvement in Presbyterian Youth Triennium, another Stewards by Design conference, and a host of mission trips planned by congregations or church offices. Two or three regional conferences across the country are also planned over the next year which will have a specific focus on laity equipping.

While Mr. Browns' appointment is for one year, most of that equipping will take place over the next several years, at the congregation, presbytery and national levels. It is hoped that most congregations will make laity equipping a focus for the next year.



When in Rome

by Harry McGee

Worshipping with Presbyterians in the Eternal City

We didn't do what the Romans do — which is to attend any one of the city's 600 Roman Catholic churches on Sunday. We found the one and only Presbyterian church located at 7, via XX Settembre. It was not far from the Fontana di Trevi where, minutes before, I did what all non-Romans do: tossed three coins into the fountain, firing them some distance over the crowds below. Having conceded to custom in this way, I re-entered our taxi and asked for the nearby address. The look on the driver's face when he found the place and read the sign was a priceless mixture of surprise, then assumed mistake and, finally, incredulity. It read "St. Andrew's Church, Rome: The Church of Scotland."

The look on the taxi driver's face when he found the place and read the sign was a priceless mixture of surprise, then assumed mistake and, finally, incredulity. It read "St. Andrew's Church, Rome: The Church of Scotland"

The church is a strange-looking, four-storey structure fitted tightly between two larger buildings on either side. It is set back from the street and gated with huge wrought iron fences stretched between concrete columns. There is a courtyard of fine gravel between the fence and the church, and the centre and edges are planted with palms and other tropical plants. The first storey of the edifice, with its gothic door and gothic windows, bespeaks the presence of the church. The next two storeys look like cloisters and are rented out to government departments for income. The fourth storey is the manse.

Inside the portal, we were greeted as warmly as we are at Westmount Church in London, Ontario, and we signed the guest-book. The supply minister, filling in for the vacationing cleric, was Bob Logan from the Presbytery of St. Andrew's in Scotland.

Inside the nave, the church was a shocking contrast to this vast city of graven images — often undraped or unleafed. None here, save for an insignia of a burning bush embroidered on an antependium. The windows, which were open to admit some air, were frosted and without any colour except for a richly hued band around the perimeter. Someone was slowly playing a simple organ at the back of the church. There was no carpet or anything else to absorb the sound, so the hymns sung slowly were unbelievably rich. Silent fans tried to lessen the heat. Shirt-sleeves were the rule.

The service shed new insights on the parable of the prodigal. The prayer message we took away was that we cannot do much to increase the length of our life, *but we can do a lot to increase its depth and its width*. We were enriched.

At the conclusion of the service, we learned that the young couple in the pew ahead of us was from Utrecht, Netherlands, and the young woman in the pew behind was Susan Bailey of Stratford, Ontario! Two tour colleagues spotted our names in the guest-book and came in before the service long enough to say, "We found you!" They were from Toronto. This world is small.

Afterwards, we were invited to take the antiquated cage lift to the roof garden for refreshments. There, purple and bright pink bougainvillea and the ubiquitous oleander were the predominant flowers. I looked down on St. Peter's dome in the near distance and photographed it. I also became acquainted with Giuseppe Caruso. No, he doesn't sing, but he did read the lesson. Years ago, his grandparents were

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VISA

Creation crossword answers (from page 50):

Down 1. Birds 2. Genesis 5. Sea

Across 1. Buds 2. God 3. Sky 4. Trees

members of the Assembly of God congregation in Rome, and he was originally a member of the Waldensian Church in Italy. However, the Presbyterian Church provided him greater personal fulfilment.

Then I read about the long struggle for the Church of Scotland to maintain a presence in Italy. Today, the churches that were established in Naples, Leghorn, Genoa, Venice, San Remo and Florence have all disappeared. Only the church in Rome remains, despite considerable harassment in the 1800s by the papal authorities. Its members had to worship clandestinely then because they could be arrested for holding religious meetings in homes. (This reminds me of our early days in Montreal when we had to meet secretly to see the movie of Martin Luther's life.)

In the 1900s, conditions became easier, except during the Second World War when the Italian government took over the church. Today, there are ecumenical activities among the various English-language churches, such as the Waldensian Evangelical Church and the Roman Catholic Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

In addition to ministering to its 45 roll members, St. Andrew's Church in Rome is dedicated to serving the needs of visitors and diplomatic staff, as well as expatriate groups. The Korean Church holds three services in the church each Sunday to accommodate its numbers. I also became acquainted with one of several Afro-Romans who attend the English language service. The church gained several office-bearers from among the staff of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization when it moved from Washington to Rome.

Thanks to the board of world mission and the Europe committee, St. Andrew's Church will continue to provide a Reformed Christian presence and tradition in the Eternal City into the third millennium after Christ. Remember to experience this church when you spend a Sunday in Rome. We have attended Presbyterian churches in Sydney and Edinburgh. This one, within a short distance of the Trevi fountain, was the most memorable. R

Harry McGee is a member of Westmount Church in London, Ont.

Music for miracles

An evening of gospel music, "Music for Miracles," organized and sponsored by Trinity Church, Kanata, Ontario, to benefit Rev. Chris Vais was held at St. Andrew's Church, Ottawa, on February 17. In 1987, Chris graduated from Knox College, Toronto, and was inducted as minister of Knox Church, Waterdown, Ontario. In January 1997, he was diagnosed with ALS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease and, by 1998, he was unable to continue in congregational ministry. He and his wife, Susan, moved in with Chris's parents in Vankoughnet, Ontario.

A group of family and friends decided to combine their efforts as a Circle of Friends to support the Vaises. They were able to provide assistance when Chris and Susan moved to their new home in Guelph, Ontario, last December. In the program notes for the February concert, Rev. Shaun Seaman, minister of Trinity Church, Kanata, described the event as "our effort to help Susan and Chris in their increasingly demanding daily lives by making a significant contribution to the essential renovations required to their home." The organizers also hoped to raise awareness of ALS, which has no known cause and no known cure.

Although confined to a wheelchair, Chris Vais is continuing his ministry through a newsletter called *For Words*. His powerful witness to God is evident in his newsletter and could also be heard in a sermon he wrote entitled "The Faithfulness of God," which Susan preached on February 18 at Trinity Church. The sermon closed with these words: "And when the day of resurrection comes, with the sound of trumpets blaring, and a billion suns shimmering in a cloudless sky, the name of our God is I SHALL BE THERE."



Photo: Wayne Levene

Rev. Chris and Susan Vais are joined by Rev. Shaun Seaman and event organizer Ellen Whittingham at the "Music for Miracles" evening organized by Trinity Church, Kanata, Ont.

For Words is published four times a year. Subscriptions are $10 (cheque or money order made payable to: St. David's Presbyterian Church — For Words). For more information, contact: *For Words*, c/o Chris Vais, P.O. Box 31013, Guelph, ON N1H 8K1, or e-mail 2deep4words@home.com.

Joe Reed elected Moderator-Designate



Rev. Joe Reed, liaison missionary for Central America and the Caribbean, has been elected Moderator-Designate of the 127th General Assembly. He was chosen from a field of five candidates in a vote conducted among all members of presbyteries across Canada. On the evening of June 3, at the opening of General Assembly in Toronto, his name will be placed before the Assembly as the official nominee. Although the opportunity exists for other nominations at the Assembly, the Moderator-Designate has always been elected since the practice was instituted.

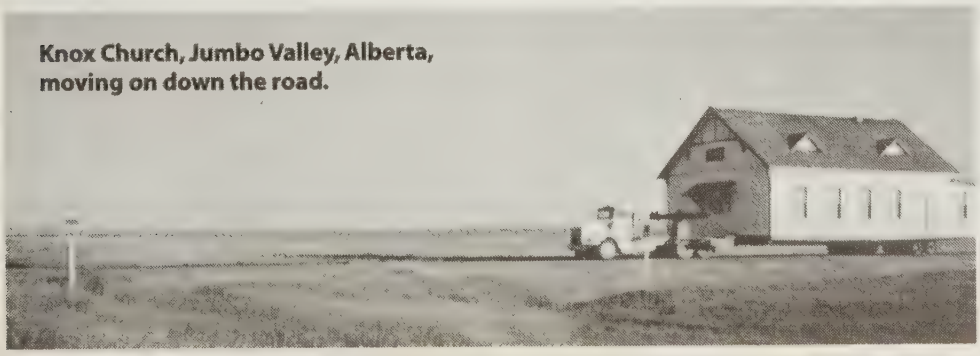
Before becoming liaison missionary in 1986, Joe served the church in a variety of ways, including: suburban parishes in New York and Montreal, inner-city work at Tyndale-St. George's, Montreal, teaching in West Africa and helping with voter registration in the American South in the 1960s.

A church on the move

For 83 years, Knox Presbyterian Church sat nestled in a verdant valley in southern Alberta, where bison, elk and deer in the thousands once ranged. Sloughs welcome a myriad of waterfowl on their annual migrations. Majestic mountains rise up in the west.

And, for 83 years, Knox Church, Jumbo Valley, stood fast while westerly winds often shook the building — shook the building but not the faith of the congregation. From the time of the congregation's founding in 1917 to its closure at the end of 1999, Knox stood as a place of spiritual solace and nurture.

Although the congregation has closed, the church building continues to stand as a place of worship, albeit in a new location. In the early morning hours of July 14, 2000, Knox Church, complete with furnishings, books and dishes, was loaded onto a truck and moved to a new location at Heritage Acres, located near the Old Man River Dam west of Fort MacLeod. From its doors, the rolling prairies and the rising peaks of the Rockies can still be seen; and, in its sanctuary, the praise of God, begun there by the pioneers years ago, lives on. (*From a report by George Peters*)



Knox Church, Jumbo Valley, Alberta, moving on down the road.

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Historic church celebrates 150th anniversary



Photo courtesy of Presbyterian Church Archives

Kildonan Church, Winnipeg, the first Presbyterian church built west of the Great Lakes.

This year, Kildonan Church, Winnipeg, is celebrating its 150th anniversary. What makes the anniversary unique among others of the same vintage is the fact that Kildonan was the first Presbyterian church established west of the Great Lakes.

The congregation was founded largely by Selkirk Settlers who came to the area from the Highland Clearances in Scotland during the years 1812-1815. Naming their new home Kildonan after their old home in Scotland, the settlers set about trying to build new lives for themselves and for their families. But life was extremely hard, and made harder by the lack of a pastor to minister to them. Lord Selkirk had promised the settlers he would send a Gaelic-speaking Presbyterian minister. It took nearly 40 years before that promise was fulfilled.

Rev. John Black, who had recently graduated from Knox College, Toronto, agreed to come to Kildonan in September 1851. He did not speak Gaelic. However, the Scottish-born minister and the settlers soon grew to respect one another and Black continued to minister at Kildonan until his death in 1882.

Upon Black's arrival, the settlers prepared to build their first church. But "an act of God" intervened when the great flood of 1852 washed away most of the building materials. It wasn't until January 1854 that Kildonan Presbyterian Church was completed and officially opened. The church, on John Black Avenue in Winnipeg, is still in use and was declared a provincial historical site in 1962.

Another building project of historical significance undertaken by the Kildonan congregation was the schoolhouse constructed under the direction of Rev. James Nisbet, who came west to assist Black in 1862. Nisbet Hall, as the schoolhouse was called, became the site of the first classes held by Manitoba College which, over time, evolved into The University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg.

In 1981, the congregation decided to build a new, larger church directly north of the old church. When Kildonan Community Church was dedicated in 1988, a refurbished Nisbet Hall formed part of the building.

To celebrate 150 years of Presbyterian witness in Western Canada, the congregation is holding a series of special events throughout the year. Information can be obtained from Katherine MacLeod at (204) 582-3211 or Valerie Wilson at (204) 339-2892. (*From a report by Katherine MacLeod*)

Presbyterian Record wins Associated Church Press award

The *Presbyterian Record* has won a 2000 Associated Church Press award for the cover of its January 2000 issue, which featured the painting *Calvary* by Mexican artist Octavio Ocampo. The Associated Church Press represents about 200 religious publications in the United States and Canada.

Anglican scientist/priest wins Templeton Prize

Arthur R. Peacocke, a prominent biochemist and Anglican priest, who has devoted his life to elucidating the relationship between science and theology, has won the 2001 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

Peacocke, age 76, an Oxford University professor with doctorates in both science and theology, is the founder of the Society of Ordained Scientists, an international ecumenical organization trying to bridge the gap between science and religion and to foster spirituality among scientists.

"It is absolutely vital to the future of our culture that these 'realms' enter into a dialogue," Peacocke said in an interview before the announcement of the award on March 8 in New York City. Widely considered the most prestigious prize in religion, this year's award is valued at 700,000 pounds sterling (about $1 million US).

The annual award, established in the early 1970s by the U.S. born (Presbyterian) investor John Marks Templeton, is given to an individual whose work has deepened the world's understanding of God and who has shown a commitment to spiritual life and public service. Previous winners have included Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the late Mother Teresa and Billy Graham. Templeton created the award because the annual Nobel prizes overlooked religion. The cash award with the Templeton Prize is always set higher than that of the Nobel prizes.

Professor Peacocke is the third scientist in a row to win the Templeton Prize. Perhaps it represents something "of the front of a wave" — a trend of science and religion learning from each other, Peacocke said. (*ENI*)

Taiwan commemorates 100th anniversary of death of George Leslie Mackay

In March 2001, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan began a year of commemoration recognizing the 100th anniversary of the death of Rev. George Leslie Mackay, the first Canadian Presbyterian missionary to Taiwan.

A delegation from Canada, which included a girls tug-of-war team from Oxford County in Ontario (Mackay's birthplace), the deputy warden of Oxford County and the Ingersoll (Ontario) Pipe Band, took part in the opening celebrations. Also present were Rev. Danny Hwang, co-chair of the Canadian Mackay Committee, and Wilma Welsh, senior administrator with International Ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and a former missionary to Taiwan.

The celebrations began with a torch-lighting event at Mackay's gravesite. Ten torches were lit and carried to approximately 250 communities in northern Taiwan by members of congregations and other organizations. The celebrations acknowledge not only Dr. Mackay's contributions to the church, but also to the medical and educational institutions in Taiwan.



Wilma Welsh of International Ministries prepares to light the main candle at the torch-lighting ceremony commemorating the 100th anniversary of the death of George Leslie Mackay.

UK churches bring prayers and help as foot-and-mouth disease devastates

Churches and related organizations are at the forefront of help for rural communities devastated by Britain's foot-and-mouth disease crisis.

Gordon Gatward, a Methodist minister who directs the church-backed Arthur Rank Centre, a key support organization for farmers, says he has seen "grown men crying — they don't know where to turn."

Counselling telephone helplines run by the Samaritans, which has links to the Befrienders international movement, are receiving rising numbers of calls from farmers in despair or tempted to commit suicide. Even before the crisis, suicides among farmers in England and Wales averaged more than one a week, according to a Samaritan spokesperson.

Churches all over Britain are contributing to a relief fund for farmers and farm workers that is being administered by the Arthur Rank Centre. The money collected ($725,000 US by the end of March) is being paid out in small grants to help with immediate needs like animal feed and cash for free-lance farm workers with no work. With farm incomes to be affected for months, Gatward acknowledged that these small grants would be needed repeatedly.

"How confident am I of the fund coping?" he said. "People are very generous. We go by faith." (*ENI*)

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news scan

Would you Adam and Eve [believe] it? The Bible in Cockney

A Gospel translation in London street slang, in which Jesus heals by stretching out his "Ramsgate" before "boarding a nanny with his chinas," has won the backing of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey. *The Bible in Cockney — well, bits of it anyway* includes traditional rhyming slang from East London's working-class community in which common words are represented by down-to-earth rhymes: "nanny" stands for nanny goat = boat; "china" is china plate = mate and "Ramsgate" is Ramsgate sands = hand or hands. The book also uses current street idioms so that the last part of the Lord's Prayer comes out as: "You're the Boss, God, and will be for ever, innit? Cheers, Amen." (*ENI*)

Oh, those wild and crazy clergy

The fact that April 1 fell on a Sunday this year was not missed by a few of the clergy in Scotland, reports the *Glasgow Herald*. For example, Canon Len Black of St. Michael's Episcopalian Church in Inverness announced in the church newsletter that a television recording of a service held a couple of weeks earlier had been damaged. The camera crew was coming back on the 1st, and could the congregation help out by wearing the same clothes and sitting in the same seats as they did at the other service. Many did, despite repeated references to April 1 in the newsletter. Similarly, Father Loreto Tabone of St. Mary's in Stirling, a magnificent Pugin-style church with an arched ceiling of which the congregation is quite proud, announced in church on April 1 that, because of the international Kyoto emissions agreement, a false ceiling would have to be created to reduce heating bills. But the good news, he said, was that they could use the extra space to store furniture. No one complained.

Ecumenical leader condemns international credit system

Dr. Konrad Raiser, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, has sharply criticized inequalities in the international credit system on which the global economy is based, claiming it is loaded against the debtor nations. Raiser made his comments at a public meeting on "Jubilee and Third World Debt" held in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Several speakers at the meeting endorsed Raiser's keynote address, and delegates called for "moral and ethical values" to be imposed on the international credit system. (*ENI*)

Forgive them their debts?

Christians in Woodland Park, Colorado, were surprised to discover that a group of seven men who represented themselves as missionaries were actually escaped prisoners from Texas. Members of a gang that escaped from a Texas prison in December visited the city's Christian bookstore and attended Bible studies at a campground where they were hiding out until their recapture in January. A police spokesperson said the gang put on a religious act to blend in. (*The Church Herald*)

briefly noted

Mission staff arrivals and departures
Arrivals: *Christy Biggs*, from Malawi, late April; *Clarence and Cathy McMullen*, from India, mid-May; *Margaret Vanderzweerde*, from India and Nepal, mid-May.
Departures: *Arlene Onuoha*, April 8, for Nigeria.

National staff departures: *Charlotte Brown*, executive secretary of the WMS, April 12, to pursue supervised pastoral education and chaplaincy at a London, Ont. hospital.

Survivor: *Anyone* who took part in a recent FLAMES trip to Mozambique and Malawi led by the editor of the *Record*.

Carl Andrew Wassenaar

My life with my best friend's kidney

Donating an organ brings new life to the giver as well as to the receiver

"You can have one of mine!" the voice on the phone said.

"One of your what? Who is this?" was my dumbfounded reply.

"It's Juhlii! You can have one of my kidneys!" Those words profoundly changed the next three years of my life.

Three years before, I was diagnosed with chronic renal (kidney) failure. It began one May morning in 1995 when I awoke with my right leg swollen twice the normal size. I managed to get an appointment with the doctor that day and was sent for lab tests on my blood. The results were inconclusive but, none the less, I was referred to a nephrologist (kidney specialist) in Vancouver. It was not until mid-November, after several visits to the nephrologist, that I was diagnosed with immuno-glomular nephritis, IGA for short. I was informed I would probably not require dialysis for one to five years, depending on the rate of progress of the disease.

This news hit me like the proverbial ton of bricks. Over the next several days, I started coming to grips with what this meant for my life. I had to make some quick, drastic adjustments to my lifestyle. Through everything, I had the strong support of my family, friends and church. I knew none of them could fully understand what I was going through, but the information published by the Kidney Foundation was a great asset.

I continued to work 40 to 50 hours per week in construction to keep my mind busy and away from morbid thoughts. I was determined not to let this disease beat me! I was going to do as much as possible before I could no longer do so. That time came sooner than any of the doctors, or I, expected. It was only 13 months after diagnosis that I was too ill to continue working and was forced to start hemodialysis.

This was a nerve-racking time, not only for me but also for my family. My parents were at my side as often as possible. One of my few solaces was prayer. I knew the Lord would get me through this but I had to do my part as well. The months dragged by one after another. There was no break from my now tedious routine of waking up at 5:30 a.m., working from 7:30 a.m. until 4 p.m., then going to the dialysis unit in Vancouver on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, returning home by 11:30 at night.

That fateful day when I received the phone call happened in April 1998, only eight days after I mailed a letter to my friend Juhlii in Edmonton, telling her what had been happening in my life since we last saw each other five years earlier. We had originally met at a Presbyterian youth convention in Nanaimo, British Columbia, and soon became close friends. We learned we lived a few blocks from each other and, so, spent a lot of time together over the next three years. We confided in each other — our ideas, frustrations and dreams — as well



Juhlii Fehr and Andrew Wassenaar.

Why do you want to do this? Juhlii's story

In April 1998, I was surfing the Net and came across Canada's White Pages. After five years of having no contact with Andrew, I thought I would check if he were listed. Finding his brother's address, I took a chance and wrote him. In June, I received a short letter from Andrew telling me he had kidney disease and was on dialysis.

Within 20 minutes of opening that letter, I called information and found his home phone number (much easier now that I had his address). When he answered the phone, the first words out of my mouth were, "Do you want mine?"

"Who is this?" he responded. We talked for some time. He gave me all the information he could on where I would have to go to be tested to see if we were a match. I made many calls to British Columbia before I finally talked to someone at the hospital who could help me. I was put in contact with the Hope Foundation of Edmonton and proceeded with all the testing.

I pushed to get all the testing finished as soon as possible. I had to wait three weeks before finding out if we were a match or not. That was the most agonizing three weeks I have ever spent. Then, finally, I got the phone call: I was a match! I was full of excitement and called Andrew right away.

The testing I went through was thorough. Every doctor asked the same question, "Why are you doing this?" To this day, I don't really have an answer. I simply saw an opportunity to help a friend, and went for it. Although the testing process was long and the timing could be inconvenient, I didn't find it disturbing. During my whole testing process, I did not have any fears. My fears didn't come until I was on the plane, flying to Vancouver. I am not sure it was fear as much as being nervous. I had not seen Andrew for five years.

The day after my arrival was the day of testing at the hospital. Andrew and I both had to undergo blood tests and I had to go through three more interviews with doctors and social workers. They all asked me the same questions: "Why do you want to do this?" "How will you feel if the kidney is rejected?" It seems not many friends come forward to donate.

Andrew was admitted to the hospital the day before I was. I was admitted on a Sunday afternoon. Monday morning at 7:30, they took me for surgery. I was scared, but mostly because my family was not with me. But there was something inside me, right from the beginning, that told me everything would be OK.

The day Andrew walked into my hospital room will always stay in my mind. He looked so good, so full of life. He had so much colour in his cheeks and a big smile on his face.

This whole experience has changed my outlook on life. Life is precious. For anyone considering becoming a donor, it is well worth it.

— Juhlii Fehr

as hanging out and having fun. Her decision to move back home to Edmonton was difficult for both of us. It was through much discussion and prayer that it became easier.

Her call started months of testing to determine if she would be a compatible donor for me. It turned out she was a near perfect match! Amazing how God works when our need is greatest! Despite my determination to keep life as normal as possible and because of Juhlii's stubbornness, we managed to do seven months of tests in only four months! The time came to choose a date for the transplant operation, October or February? We settled on November. There were appointments with counsellors, doctors and even a psychologist! They wanted to make sure Juhlii was doing this for the right reasons. What we wanted to do had never been done in British Columbia before — a non-related living donor transplant of a kidney — so the doctors were unsure whether or not it would succeed. We were asked about our relationship with each other, if it would affect our relationship positively or cause undue strain afterward.

Seeing Juhlii again after five years was amazingly simple. It was as if there had never been an absence. We were able to talk and joke with each other and share our hopes for the upcoming surgery.

November 9, 1998, the day my life began anew. The day of my surgery was exactly 23 months to the day since I had begun dialysis. I was strangely calm that morning as the intern wheeled me from my room down to the operating room at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver. I had prayed for the skills of the doctor and the rest of the surgical team, and for courage for Juhlii and myself. I felt I had nothing to fear with God at my side, holding my hand and the scalpel at the same time. I emerged from surgery successfully but, 10 hours later, was rushed back in for more surgery to correct a leak inside me. By the following afternoon, I was fully awake, in pain and grumpy! I was not expecting all the tubes and wires that were attached to me or, in some cases, coming out of me.

One of my first visitors was a resident from my building, a pastor at the local United church around the corner from where I live. He joked with me and prayed with me. This helped lift my spirits and prepare for the days ahead. Over the next few days in hospital, Juhlii and I were visited by many mutual friends, the clergy and some members of the congregation in Richmond that I still attended on occasion.

Only five days after surgery, I was released from hospital. Juhlii had to remain for another day and a half as her surgery was more involved than mine was. I had 19 stitches from my waistline down. She had 39 from her stomach around to her back! My recovery time was forecast to be about two months, but hers would be about six. I will always be grateful that Juhlii freely gave one of her kidneys so I could return to normal life. Because of her, I no longer need to be hooked up to a machine three days a week.

All that has happened to me in the past three years has affected me profoundly. I no longer take things for granted. "Don't sweat the small stuff, because it's all small stuff" rings true for me now. Along with the loss of a kidney, Juhlii's life has changed, too. She has matured and has seen the glimmer of faith in her life. "This is the best thing I could ever do for anyone," she says.

We hope what Juhlii has done for me will inspire you to help those in need in any way you can. The gift of life can be as a blood donor, signing up as an organ donor or in hundreds of other possible ways. My life was saved by a friend, someone who cared. What an example for us to follow! R

Andrew Wassenaar writes from Langley, B.C.



Ted Siverns

The cabbage and rose connection

Every congregation consists of a wonderful diversity

Ephesians 1:15-23

Beginning next month, the *FLAMES* initiative will focus on the laity. The Greek word from which laity is derived, *laos*, began its history meaning "the people" or "crowd." In the New Testament, it means "the people of God." In other places, the word for those in Christ is *hagios*, "holy ones" or "saints." That said, the reality is we and the people addressed in the Letter to the Ephesians are an odd assortment of cabbages and roses.

Chapter 1 should be considered altogether but, for now, read one verse. That Greek verse appears in English as Ephesians 1:15-21! If you are ambitious, read 1:3-10, a single verse of 130 words! One scholar called these ornate verses "the most monstrous conglomeration of sentences in the Greek language." Never mind, read the passages in a standard English translation and, then, in a good paraphrase such as *The Message* by Eugene Peterson.

The first chapter is a hymn-like prayer of thanksgiving that sings the power of God manifest through Christ's resurrection and ascension. The ascension of Jesus is God's assurance that the power at work in Christ's resurrection is even now at work among the *laos*, the people of God. What God has done leads to a people who live in hope — hope for the church and hope for the world.



Verses 15-23 highlight the Christian community at Ephesus as the Body of Christ and, therefore, the cause of thanksgiving. Members of the Christian community are not on their own but are a part of Christ's body. They are *hagios*, "holy ones" or "saints"; though, be careful, they are not holy in themselves. The saints are holy as members of the church, as *laos*, the people and possession of God. Only God is the Holy One. We are not the source of light, only instruments.



> A saint is someone through whom the light shines.

This light of hope is marked by the presence of grace and life lived in fellowship with other brothers and sisters of the faith. This grace and fellowship will have little appeal or relevance to those committed to material gain and to the fulfilment of personal agendas. Yet, the saints, though a mixed lot indeed, are the unlikely bearers of God's grace, bearers of "treasure in earthen vessels" (II Corinthians 4:7). Still,

> A saint is someone who makes it easier to believe in God.

Paul (or, if you prefer, the writer of Ephesians) prays for these same saints that they and we may have a deeper comprehension of the redeeming will and power of God. As the Body of Christ, there is a place for all the *laos*, all the roses and cabbages, when a "diversity of ministry and unity of mission" is recognized.

In a brief review of material on "the laity," this time in specific reference to

that part of the people of God who are not "professionals" (those who sit in the pews not at the pulpit), I conclude that we too often function as if the church means "clergy and those who help them." Not so!

Among the promising renewed emphasis on the role of the laity, we may include *Living Faith* 7.2.1:

> All Christians are called
> to participate in the ministry of Christ.
> As his body on earth
> we all have gifts to use
> in the church and in the world ...

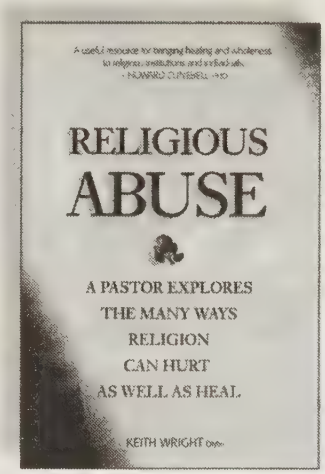
Another tradition asserts that the "ministry of the pastor" cannot be effective without the ministry of the laity who "are marvellously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them." Time spent with the section called "The Lay Faithful" in the 1992 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* would be time well spent.

It is true that there are many problems and much tension in many of our congregations, but a common sense of mission focuses the diversity. The Body of Christ consists of a variety of components. Some are like "roses" and some like "cabbages," and words attributed to H. L. Mencken help to establish the need for both: "My grandfather knew that roses smelled better than cabbage, and so he assumed that roses would make better soup." It is clearly not so! Every congregation consists of a wonderful diversity that includes cabbages and roses, but it is a diversity that must focus on mission, to the glory of God. R

For discussion and reflection

- There are several definitions of "saint" above. I add: "A saint is one who makes goodness attractive" and "A saint is a winner in God's minority." How do you define "saint"?
- Someone suggested that the greatest contribution by Presbyterians to evangelism is restraint. If this is so, how can this be changed?
- To what extent does the seeking of personal power in "The Body" thwart the legitimate ministry of the laity?

L. E. (Ted) Siverns is the minister of First Church in New Westminster, B.C.



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Frank G. Sterle

Back to the basics

We need to care for one another as we care for ourselves

"Spare change?" asked the squeaky, disembodied voice. I turned from the bank machine to the source and asked how much he was seeking and how he planned to spend it. "Maybe 30 cents," he replied, "so I'll have enough to get a Big Mac." Then he began muttering to himself.

The appearance of the man sitting on the tiled bank floor that chilly March evening didn't convince me of his claimed intent for any financial donation. His light brown hair and beard were unkempt and frazzled. He wore a dirty, blue T-shirt and greyish white sweatpants that stopped at his upper calves. His sockless feet sunk into cheap, worn sneakers. His light blue eyes seemed unfocused, like those of a drunken man; but I detected no liquor on his breath. This man clearly suffered from a serious mental illness.

I flipped him a loonie. "Wow!" was his grateful reply. "Thanks a lot!" he said as I walked out the bank door.

Some hours later that night, while replaying the event in my mind, I realized the blatant inequality of it all. Here was a person with the very least in society seeking food money and shelter in an outlet of the nation's most profitable institution. Collectively, Canada's large banks make billions in after-tax profit. And, needless to say, our mostly Christian society could give more to those who are impoverished through a better redistribution of our collective (and individual) wealth.

Those familiar with Jesus' teachings know he is as far from being a capitalist as could be. He taught that one should acquire and retain only what one needs to subsist. He despised wealth and was an adamant proponent of his adherents selling their assets and giving the proceeds to the poor.

From my perspective, too many "Christians" (not to mention followers of most of the other major religions) are capitalistic and somewhat callous toward society's poor. Some hold the belief that God blesses his people with the right, for example, to own gratuitously three cars and a swimming pool. Everyone is responsible for himself or herself, they think, and one only needs to become a Christian and ask God for what one requires (or, perhaps, simply wants). This, despite Jesus' teachings that God gives to those in need through his followers. It is not enough for Christians to give a certain small portion of their earnings to their churches and then go home thinking they've done their moral share.

It is not enough for Christians to give a certain small portion of their earnings to their churches and then go home thinking they've done their moral share

Through his novel *Oliver Twist*, Charles Dickens expressed his profound dismay with many of his "Christian" compatriots. One of the pompous characters, Mr. Bumble, a poor house headmaster, professes to be Christian but treats impoverished people with contempt while he feasts on steaks with oyster sauce and porter's beer. After a starving, homeless man and his large family come to him for assistance, Mr. Brumble states indignantly to a colleague: "Give 'em a apron full of coals today, and they'll come back for another the day after tomorrow, as brazen as alabaster."

The day after the hungry man warns that he'll starve to death in the street — an act Mr. Bumble forbids him to carry out — Bumble comments: "He went away; and he did die in the streets. There's a obstinate pauper for you!"

I hope society is not returning to the inhumane times Dickens wrote about; however, with the gap between the rich and the poor widening these days, who knows? What I do know, though, is that a lot more people — myself included — need to get back to the Christian basics. We need to care for one another as we care for ourselves. R

Frank G. Sterle edits and produces two quarterly newsletters and one semi-annual creative-writing publication and is currently in the last stages of producing a fine-bound anthology to which he contributed as well as editing.


R. Sheldon MacKenzie

Some do, some don't

How do we better reflect Christ's life? Practise, practise, practise

An internationally famous pianist had barely finished playing before a large and appreciative audience. Many from the crowded auditorium tried to make their way, and wait their turn, to express their appreciation to the elderly classical artist. One woman, more effusive than the others, said to him, "Sir, I would give my life if I could play like that."

"Madam," he replied, "I did."

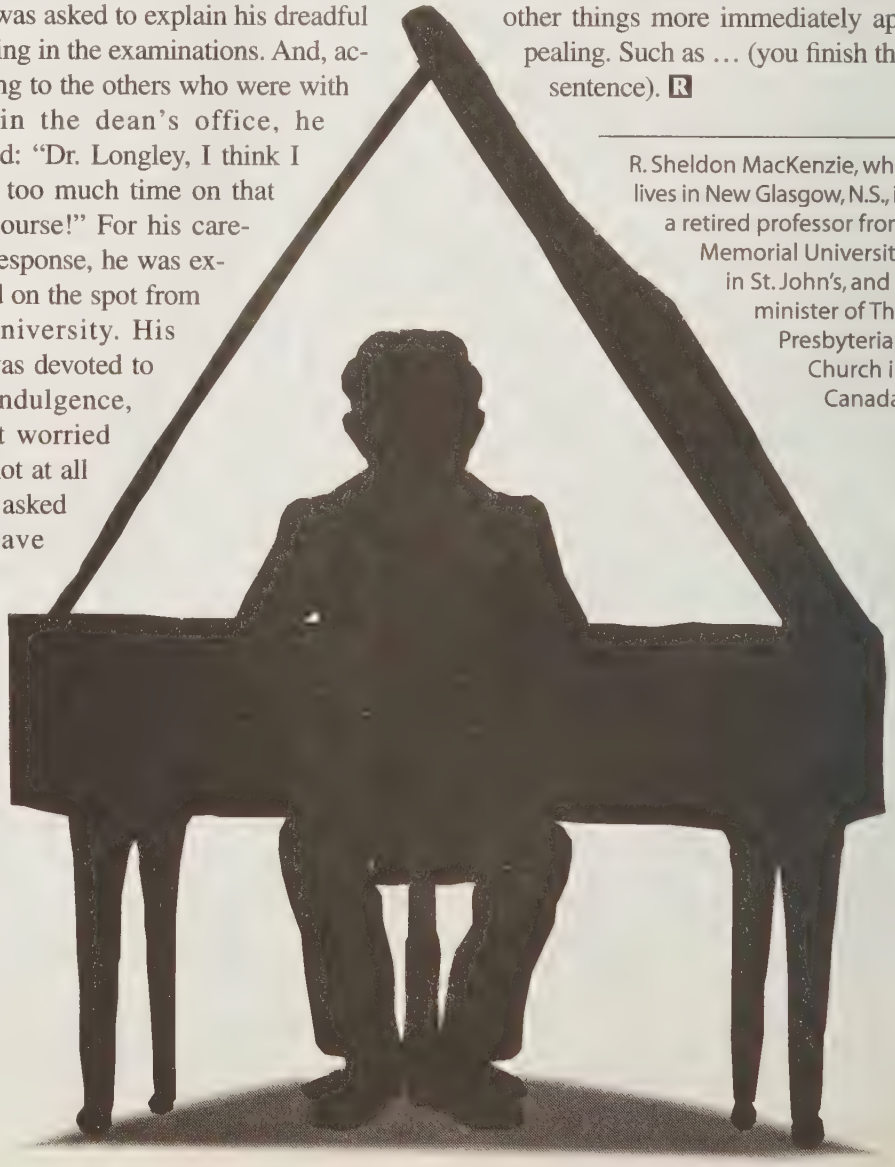
We don't know how she reacted to that simple and humbling comment. We know all sorts of people, don't we, who give their lives to great causes or to making a living for their children better than the one they had for themselves. Or devote themselves to a profession or calling in which they eventually excel well beyond their colleagues. Those at the top of many popular sports, and some not so popular, are there simply because they have sacrificed interests in other things. Sometimes, unhappily, sacrificing their spouses and children along the way. The point is, nothing significant happens without whole-hearted devotion to making it so.

We also know of people who make no effort at excellence. And they are happy to be that way. In the early 1950s, there was a young man at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, who did very little work, ever. He enjoyed the good life and both said and did outrageous things. Unlike the rest of us, he came with lots of money and all the self-confidence imaginable. He was the son of the developer of a gold mine in Northern Ontario, a young man who had been thoroughly spoiled. He was in no state of preparedness to write the first set of examinations in December. When his marks were posted, he had failed all but one and had been given only a pass in that one.

Along with some others, he was summoned to the office of the dean of arts. The dean was an austere person, a merciless administrator, a person totally without humour and a man of whom the rest of the campus lived in awe. The young man was asked to explain his dreadful showing in the examinations. And, according to the others who were with him in the dean's office, he replied: "Dr. Longley, I think I spent too much time on that one course!" For his carefree response, he was expelled on the spot from the university. His life was devoted to self-indulgence, and it worried him not at all to be asked to leave the university. He had no intention whatever of giving his life for anything, at least not for academic excellence.

What is true for the classical pianist is true also for the Christian life. If, at the end of it all, we better reflect the life of Christ than we did at the beginning, it is simply because we have given our lives to his way. And if not, it may be that we have concentrated too much on many other things more immediately appealing. Such as … (you finish the sentence). R

R. Sheldon MacKenzie, who lives in New Glasgow, N.S., is a retired professor from Memorial University in St. John's, and a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.





Tony Plomp

Cultic spirituality

question: *What is the difference between a church and a religious cult?*

There are a number of signs along the way that will give you a clue as to whether or not you are dealing with a religious cult. One such characteristic is an inordinate focus on and loyalty to a charismatic personality who is not accountable to anyone else and who controls his/her followers in every aspect of their lives. Rev. Jim Jones, who led 900 of his followers to commit suicide some years ago, started out as a popular preacher in a so-called "mainline" denomination. Reports tell us the congregation consisted of a wonderfully diverse mix of races and ethnic groups. People felt they had discovered genuine Christian community. Unfortunately, the congregation's life became more and more centred on the preacher and his directives. Warning bells should have gone off when he allegedly tossed the Bible off the pulpit and declared, "From now on, you listen only to me!"

A second warning sign, related to the first, is that Christian cults or cult-like groups also inevitably place the teachings of its leader, written or spoken, on a par with Scripture. In some cases, such teachings supersede those of the Bible. So there is an apparent allegiance to the authority of the Bible, but also the introduction of "another" revelation without which the biblical one is said to be incomplete. This is always a clear and present danger to any Christian church whenever cherished confessional statements, for instance, begin to place a "strait-jacket" on the interpretation of Scripture and there is no longer a willingness to be illuminated and corrected continually by the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures.

A third characteristic of cults is to emphasize the sharp division that exists between "believers" and "unbelievers" and the consequent development of a "ghetto mentality." Although it is true Christians are, in the words of one theologian, "resident aliens" in this world, cults will inevitably force its members to associate only with other members. In worst cases, members are told to cut off all ties with "unbelieving" family members and friends. They will sometimes be denied physical access to their loved ones, and vice versa. And if, for any reason, a member is excommunicated, he or she will be shunned and, to all intents and purposes, regarded as "dead" to the community. So the theme is one of "us" against "them." I always remember asking a tradesman to make a bid on repairing the manse roof. He gave me a fair price. When I requested that he send the bill to the church, he told me he would not work for any church because it was "the synagogue of Satan."

A fourth related characteristic is that the members are given little time to think of anything but the cult and its activities. Former members of the Jim Jones temple report they were "worked to death," always on the go on "church business," attending meetings and activities of all sorts, not free to think for themselves or allowed to express diverse opinions. Thus, the cult forcibly begins to absorb the whole life and destroy the individuality of its members. Again, in worst case scenarios, the members, if living communally, are deliberately sleep-deprived and starved in order to make them more malleable to the leadership. So pervasive can the influence of a cult be on its members that they willingly surrender all their worldly possessions to the leadership and troop off to wherever the leader tells them to go, obediently swallowing the liquid that will kill them and their children, as happened to the group associated with Jim Jones.

Warning bells should have gone off when Jim Jones allegedly tossed the Bible off the pulpit and declared, "From now on, you listen only to me!"

The church of Jesus Christ will always seek its authority and life from him. It will place itself under the direction of the Word of God as revealed in Scripture. It will hold its leadership accountable to God's Word and to each other, and govern itself in harmony with "the law of Christ," which is the law of love. It will seek to be as inclusive as possible, while recognizing that, just as rivers have banks, so does the church have boundaries. These boundaries, however, must be those of God's Word and not the word of any man or woman or institution. Disciples of Christ will be "in

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continued

the world," although they recognize they are not "of" it, and cannot give their ultimate loyalty to it. Nevertheless, they will fully participate wherever possible in all of life, as stewards of the gospel of Christ, glad ambassadors of him who has called them "out of darkness into his marvellous light."

As you may have gathered, it is not always easy to identify a group as a "cult" or "cultic." Sometimes, Christian congregations can begin to exhibit "cultic tendencies" even though they may not strictly be a cult. A group having only one of the characteristics cited above does not necessarily a cult make. Nevertheless, the things I have listed above are what I perceive to be characteristics of cults or cult-like groups.

A congregation belonging to The Presbyterian Church in Canada is not likely to become a cult as described above. There are simply too many checks and balances in our system of governance for that to happen.

A final word. Cultic groups often arise among Christians because the church has failed in some aspect of its ministry. "Institutional Christianity," for example, may, at times, lack the warmth and the intensity of personal relationships for which people long. Small groups led by an unaccountable, charismatic personality may begin to fill that void and, in some cases, begin to exhibit the cultic tendencies that sometimes lead to the formation of a cult. R

Please send questions for Rev. Tony Plomp to tony_plomp@telus.net or 4020 Lancelot Dr., Richmond, B.C. V7C 4S3.

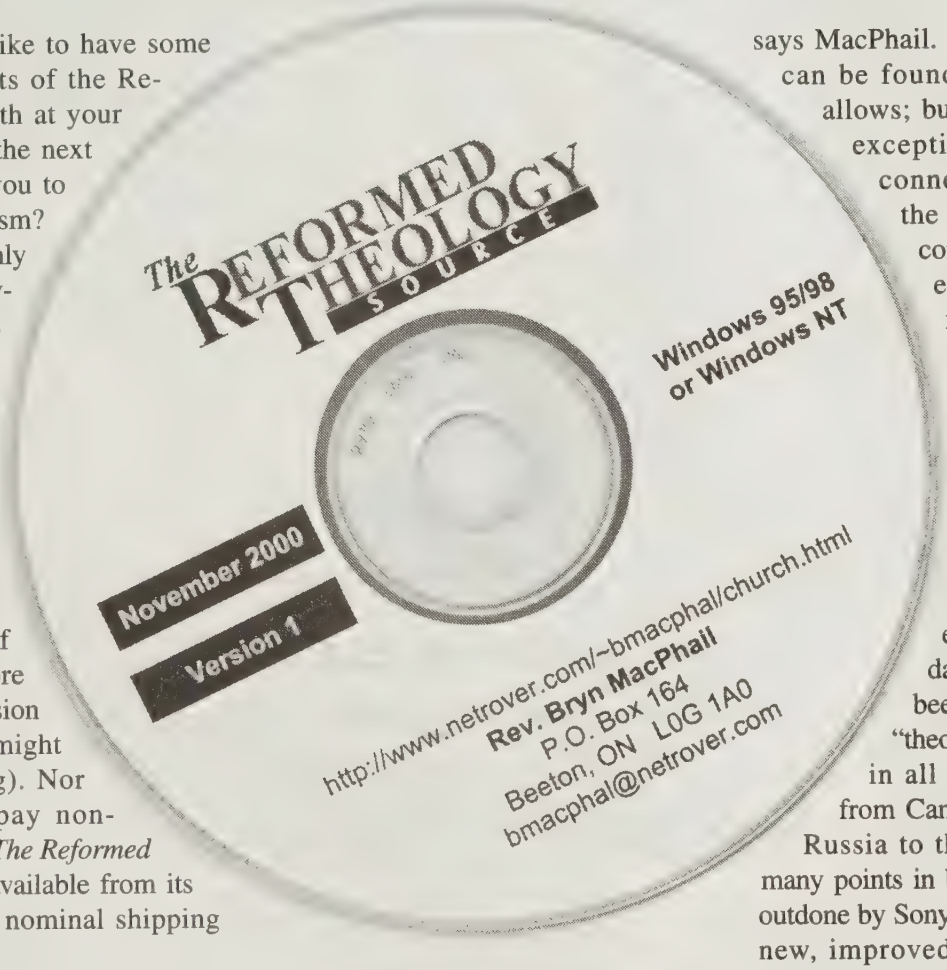
Welcome to
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Tom Dickey

Reformed theology's answer to K-tel

Basic tenets of the Reformed faith available at your fingertips

Would you like to have some basic tenets of the Reformed faith at your fingertips the next time someone asks you to explain Presbyterianism? Well, you can. It's only a few clicks of the keyboard away, thanks to a CD produced by Bryn MacPhail, minister of Fraser Church, Tottenham, and St. Andrew's Church, Beeton, Ontario. But you won't find it in the classical theology section of your local music store (although the expression on the clerk's face might be worth the asking). Nor will you have to pay non-Napster prices for it. *The Reformed Theology Source* is available from its producer for only a nominal shipping and handling charge.



Recognizing that a church Web site appeals to a limited number of people, MacPhail decided to change the focus of his congregation's Web site to being an online library of Reformed theology resources. His hunch was right. The redesigned site has been averaging as many hits per day as many church Web sites have in a month … or longer. The resulting number of e-mails he received convinced MacPhail to make his resource available in CD format. With the support of his congregations, he was able to get the project off the ground.

The Reformed Theology Source includes Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion, The Westminster Confession of Faith and selected articles and sermons by such luminaries as Richard Baxter, Thomas Boston, Jonathan Edwards, John Piper, Charles Spurgeon, B. B. Warfield and George Whitefield. MacPhail has even squeezed in more than 100 of his own sermons and a few "key audio messages," plus the ubiquitous "much more."

"Those who have come to embrace and love Reformed theology can appreciate how valuable these doctrines can be," says MacPhail. Everything on the CD can be found on the Internet, he allows; but, unless you have an exceptionally fast Internet connection, accessing all the material can be time-consuming. Although operating expenses have forced the introduction of a shipping and handling fee, MacPhail and his supporters have resisted charging for the CD because they don't want the cost to "hinder anyone from being edified by these excellent resources." To date, about 400 CDs have been shipped to interested "theologians" in 16 countries in all corners of the world, from Canada to Brazil and from Russia to the Philippines — and many points in between. And, not to be outdone by Sony, MacPhail is planning a new, improved Reformed Theology Source 2 for September.

The Reformed Theology Source can be ordered from Fraser Presbyterian Church, PO Box 164, Beeton, Ontario L0G 1A0. Please include a cheque or money order for $5 to cover shipping and handling, indicating that it is for the CD. For orders to the United States, send $5 US and, for orders outside Canada and the United States, send $6 US. (Donations are not solicited but are always appreciated.) You can also visit www.reformedtheology.ca. for more information. R

THE CONGREGATION OF Fairview Church, Vancouver, completed its 100th anniversary celebrations last year. Fairview was established in 1899, only 13 years after the City of Vancouver was incorporated, and it has been sharing God's message with the community and beyond ever since.



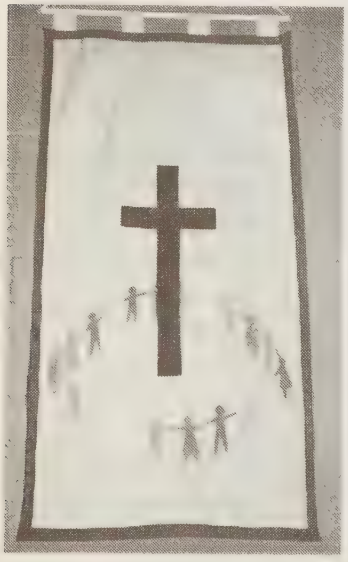


THE JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP of St. Andrew's Church, Stirling, and St. Andrew's Church, West Huntingdon, Ont., took time to express themselves when they met in the church manse recently. Pictured: (back row) Dylan Calberry, Julie Sharp and Seb Dowd; (middle) Alexander McGurk, Kyle and Rob Ferguson; (front) Courtney Calberry (holding the minister's son, Andrew Abbott), Emily Strongman and Paul Brogee; (far front) Chris Durnish.

THE WMS CRAFT GROUP of St. Andrew's Church, Bowmanville, Ont., presented a Fanning the FLAMES banner for the church sanctuary. The banner's creators were (back, L to R): Rena Sinclair, Christena Tighe, Irene Russell and Jean Linton; (front) Lucille Sturrock, Mary Vanheuvelen, Pauline Garvey and Jean Billett. (Absent: Helen Lamont)



ONE OF THE *Celebrate!* projects at Pineland Church, Burlington, Ont., was twinning with a mission congregation. Working with Rev. Heather Jones in Malawi, the congregation was put in touch with Chibavi Church. As a token of friendship, a banner, sewn by Jeanne Seaton of Pineland Church, was sent to Chibavi.





WHEN THE CONGREGATION OF Livingston Church, Baden, Ont, realized they could not afford to have the church's 1935 Woodstock organ professionally restored, they did it themselves! Under the direction of organ builder Mel Willetts, members of the congregation put in 700 person hours during the last half of 2000 refurbishing the organ. On Feb. 18, 2001, the organ was rededicated and featured in a recital by organist Gord Allgeier and pianist Merna Chambers. Pictured with the object of their labours are (L to R): Livingston Church organist Mary Eby, Lydia Maitland, Bert Currie and Kathleen Currie.

Please note: Photos submitted for People & Places must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they are to be returned. Also, please try to ensure all pictures are clear and do not include a multitude of people. Colour or black-and-white photos are acceptable, but negatives and slides cannot be used. Thank you.



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL OF First Church, Pictou, N.S., chose Camp Geddie as one of its mission projects for the past year. They raised money to buy sports equipment for the camp, which is owned by the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces. Members of the Sunday school displayed some of the donated items at an open-air service last summer.



THE CONGREGATION OF St. Andrew's Church, Campbellford, Ont., honoured Francis Long for his 50 years as an elder with the presentation of a framed drawing of the church and a certificate. Congratulating Francis (centre) and his wife, Ina, are: Neil McCulloch, (left) clerk of session, John Jackson, elder; and Rev. Lorna Thompson.



SUMMERSIDE CHURCH, Summerside, P.E.I., participated in a millennium banner project. Seven churches in the area made banners reflecting Jubilee celebrations, their denominations, and their participation in the Summerside Christian Council. Colleen Murray (second from left) and Carolyn Mellish are joined by Rev. Harry Currie in displaying their banner.

AMBERLEA CHURCH, Pickering, Ont., celebrated the 15th year of its Nativity float when members of the congregation participated in the Pickering Santa Claus Parade. The float participants handed out literature from the Canadian Bible Society to people watching the parade.





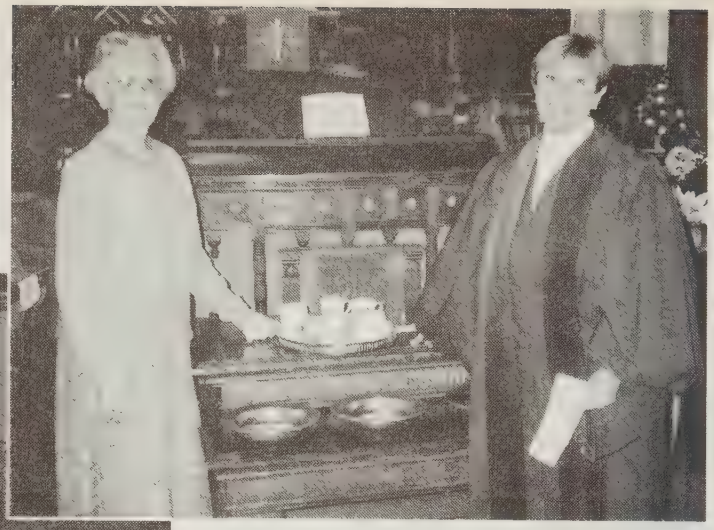
REV. RON TIESSEN may have thought he was "seeing triple" when he baptized triplets Brady, Wyatt and Dylan Campbell at Memorial Church, Rocky Mountain House, Alta. Joining them are their parents, Candice and Kevin Campbell, and older brother, Austin.

(**Please note:** Due to space limitations, the *Record* does not usually publish photos of baptisms. Exceptions are occasionally made for unusual circumstances.)



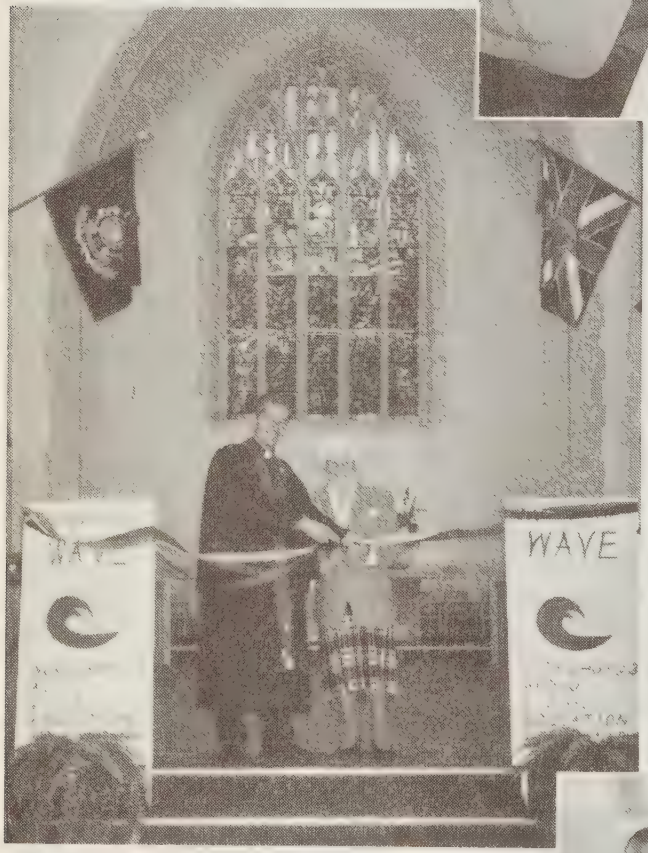
JANET DUNCAN, a member of Knox Church, Bracebridge, Ont., recently became the first woman moderator in the history of the Presbytery of Barrie.

ONE HUNDRED CHINA CUPS donated to St. Paul's Church, Winchester, Ont., by Margaret Johnstone, an elder of the congregation, were dedicated recently by Rev. Carol Bain.





THE CONGREGATION OF St. Andrew's Church, Arnprior, Ont., joined Rev. Jim Edmiston recently in celebrating the 50th anniversary of his ordination. He also received congratulations from all of his previous pastoral charges.



CATHERINE THOMSON and Rev. John Mark Lewis cut the ribbon to dedicate the newly renovated church school facility in the Church House at MacNab Street Church, Hamilton, Ont. Mrs. Thomson lived in Church House (Hamilton's first manse, constructed in 1870) when her husband, Rev. Forbes Thomson, was minister from 1957-1966. The congregation also dedicated a new, locally developed church school program called the WAVE — **W**orkshops and **A**udio-**V**isual **E**ducation. The program is designed to teach Bible stories through a variety of creative activities.



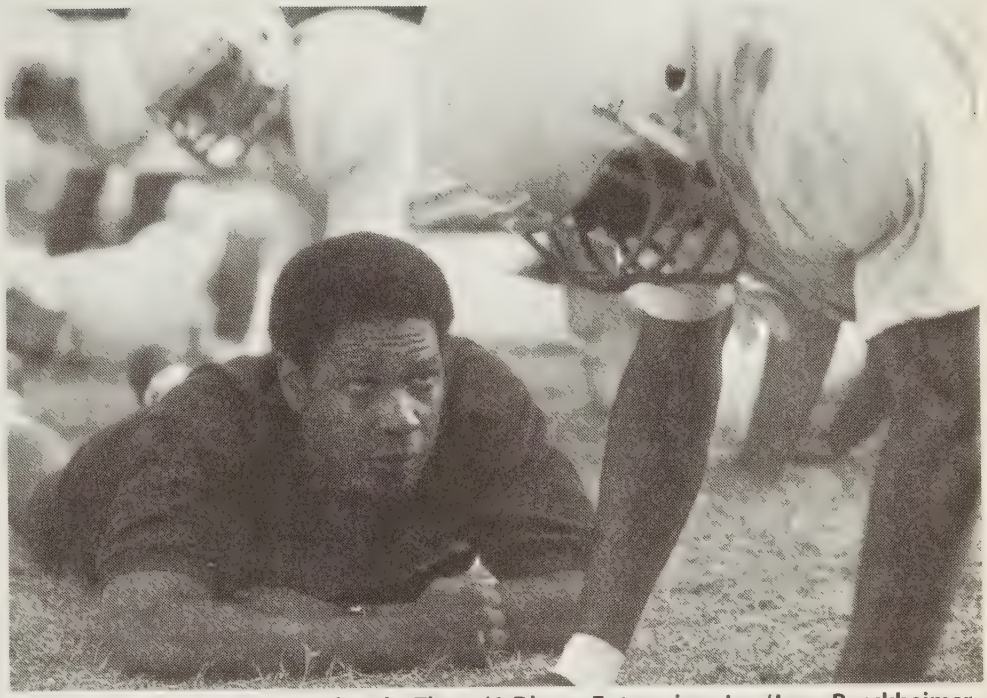
TWO SENIOR MEMBERS of the Mary McKenzie Evening Auxiliary WMS of Valetta Church, Merlin, Ont., Agnes Fletcher (left) and Henny Huiting (right), are joined by Rev. Kate Pfeffer-McIntosh in cutting the group's 60th anniversary cake.

CHRISTOPHER JORNA joined the congregation of Scottlea Church, St. Catharines, Ont., for WMS Mission Sunday weekend. On Saturday, Nov. 4, he was the guest at a pot-luck supper at which he presented slides and information about his work in Guyana. On Sunday, he preached the sermon and met the entire congregation following the worship service. Chris is pictured (third from right, back) with Rev. Martin Wehrmann and members of the church.



Film

Remember the Titans, *written by Gregory Allen Howard, directed by Boaz Yakin, starring Denzel Washington and Will Patton (Walt Disney Pictures). Reviewed by Edward McNulty.*



Denzel Washington in *Remember the Titans* (© Disney Enterprises, Inc./Jerry Bruckheimer, Inc. All Rights Reserved).

In 1971, the city of Alexandria, Virginia, was on the verge of exploding as whites and blacks screamed at each other across picket lines. School desegregation, which the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision had begun, came with an integrated high school. Fortunately, for the city, the people loved football more than either violence or their old segregationist tradition; nevertheless, the process of integration proved painfully difficult.

This film stars Denzel Washington as the newly imported head coach Herman Boone and Will Patton as the old white coach who chooses to swallow his pride and stay and work under Boone. It tells the true story behind Alexandria's present-day racial harmony. Using tough love tactics from day one, when the players are heading for football camp, Coach Boone forces the players to pair off in a black-white buddy system. He makes them give oral reports about each other and often criticizes their mistakes in public, bearing down as hard on the blacks as on the whites.

Coach Boone can be eloquent at times. He sends team members on what seems to be a pointless 3 a.m. forced run through fields and woods at a cemetery. But it is no ordinary cemetery. This is the Gettysburg battlefield, he informs them, where 50,000 men died fighting the same battle still being fought among themselves. He challenges them to end that battle by coming together for their common goal of becoming a winning football team.

Slowly, his tactics have the desired effect, and the players come to respect each other. Boone tells them he doesn't require them to love or even to like each other, but they must come to respect one another so that both blacks and whites will return to their hate-filled city and school as different individuals. How that respect becomes love is an inspiring, true story (the two coaches have remained lifelong friends), involving many crosses in the lives of students and coaches as they struggle with the prejudice of their families and classmates.

It is a sad irony in U.S. history that sports, more than churches with their gospel of love and grace, have served as the catalyst to change prejudiced white minds — Jackie Robinson in baseball on a national scale and, for Alexandria, Virginia, the forced integration of the Titans football team.

This film is a good example of what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote, "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view … " (II Corinthians 5:16a, *NRSV*). Surely, as this fine film testifies so well, Coach Herman Boone was God's agent of reconciliation at a time and a place where it was most needed.

Edward McNulty, minister of Bovina Presbyterian Church in New York State, produces *Visual Parables*, a monthly review of films, videos and the arts.

Books

The Pastoral Care of Children *by Daniel H. Grossoehme (Haworth, 1999).* **Spiritual Care for Children Living in Specialized Settings: Breathing Underwater** *by Michael F. Friesen (Haworth, 2000). Reviewed by Peter Bush.*

These books explore ways of providing pastoral care to children who are in crisis, be that a physical or psychological health crisis or some form of institutional care.

Daniel Grossoehme's book focuses on ways to provide pastoral care to children and their families in hospital settings. His book is not only for clergy but also for all Christians who may be involved in caring for hospitalized children. In fact, many of the issues he discusses and the ideas he suggests can be easily translated to visiting with and providing pastoral care to children in any setting. In particular, the second chapter, "Getting beyond the greeting," is helpful, as is his discussion of the use of ritual and prayer. He suggests the funeral of a child be handled in reverse order to our common pattern. He would have the family gather for the burial or interment

of ashes first, the grave being closed with the family present. This would be followed by the service in a church or funeral home and, then, there would be a time of refreshment and conversation. Grossoehme draws some important distinctions between visiting children in acute care or chronic care contexts.

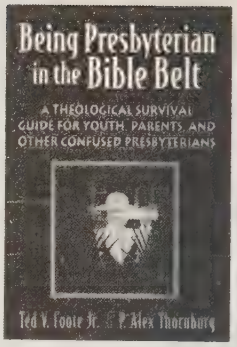
Michael Friesen is the chaplain at St. Joseph's Home for Children in Minneapolis, a home for troubled youth and various wards of the state. The book has an institutional feel at times, and some of Friesen's suggestions would not work in a non-institutional setting. However, the children he interacts with daily present challenges that are symptomatic of the disorienting waves that face all children in our North American culture: powerlessness, homelessness, rootlessness, hopelessness and grief. Friesen believes the answers to these are to be found in our faith traditions — in the responses of presence, hospitality, community, transformation and healing. In particular, anyone who is intentionally seeking to reach children with the good news will find the chapter on creating a community of values well worth reading.

These two books will help hone the pastoral care the church gives to children in crisis.

Peter Bush is minister of Knox Church, Mitchell, Ont.

Being Presbyterian in the Bible Belt: A Theological Survival Guide for Youth, Parents, and Other Confused Presbyterians *by Ted V. Foote and P. Alex Thornburg (Geneva, 2000, $20.75). Reviewed by John Congram.*

This is the American version of a book I wrote for Canadian Presbyterians a few years ago called *This Presbyterian Church of Ours*, but with a much more interesting title. (Writers don't often get the chance to choose their own titles.) It addresses all of the same questions but from a middle-of-the-road Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approach. The authors do it with a light touch and by using stories to introduce each chapter. Some of the questions they attempt to answer: "Do Presbyterians have spirit, or do they just drink them?" "Are you saved, or are you Presbyterian?" "When will the world end, or did it end in the 1960s?" At the conclusion of each chapter, there are a few questions under the title "So what do you think?" This brief book of under 100 pages could provide an excellent discussion guide for small groups or a communicants class. Or give it, as the authors suggest, to some confused Presbyterian.



Most books reviewed may be purchased through The Book Room, 50 Wynford Dr., North York, Ont. M3C 1J7. Prices include shipping and handling but not GST. Do not send payment with order. An invoice will follow. Please include name and location of congregation. Toll-free order line: 1-800-619-7301, ext. 301, e-mail: bookroom@presbyterian.ca.

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8:00 Free lecture by Philip Newell
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Tuesday, May 15
Workshop with Philip Newell
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Wednesday, May 16
3:30 Faculty Presentation
Lay Education – Prof. Nam Soon Song
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transitions

DEATHS

MEYER, REV. GEERTRUIDA GERRIETA "TRUDY," on March 8, 2001, in Saskatoon. Trudy was appointed by Canada Ministries to the Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church on January 16, 2001. Her brief ministry among the people of Mistawasis was much appreciated. Many good ministry initiatives were under way. Trudy was overjoyed to have her own church and the opportunity to fulfil what she had always wanted to do; namely, serve the Lord in the Ministry of Word and Sacraments.

PATTERSON, REV. MARIAN A., 80, formerly of Braeshore, Pictou Country, Nova Scotia, died January 17, 2001, at her home in Waterville, Maine. She spent most of her life in her native U.S.A., marrying Allan H. Patterson in 1952. She worked as a teacher and a Christian education worker, raising three children. Following the death of her husband in 1985, Marian felt called to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments and enrolled in Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, receiving the Master of Divinity in 1986. She was ordained as a minister in The Presbyterian Church in Canada at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Pictou, Nova Scotia, in November 1986, and began her ministry at St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church, Grand Falls, Newfoundland. In April 1988, she returned to Pictou and served various churches in the area as short-term supply and interim minister until, in April 1995, she joined the staff at First Presbyterian Church, New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. There she served as assistant to the minister, retiring in June 2000, at which time the church honoured her with the title of Minister Emeritus.

SCOTT, A. BEATRICE, 93, died suddenly on March 1, 2001. Missionary on the Bhil field in India from 1941-1974. Retired to Port Elgin, Ontario. Active member of Tolmie Presbyterian Church — elder, clerk of session, Bible study leader and member of Women's Missionary Society. Sadly missed by sister Jean, nieces and nephews.

BEATTY, LILLIAN (NEWCOMB) of Tisdale, Sask., died March 3, 2001, at 101 years of age. Musical contribution to church, WMS and community events for over 70 years.

BELL, JOHN ALEXANDER, a quiet, faithful member and elder, Knox Church, Harvey, N.B., Sept. 7, 2000.

CHARLTON, ARTHUR, longtime member, St. Andrew's, Lakefield, Ont., March 31, 2000.

HARRIS, JAMES, faithful and respected member, St. Andrew's, Lakefield, Ont., Nov. 12, 2000.

MARSHALL, JOHN CAMERON, in his 98th year, Feb. 21, 2001. Cameron was a member of Omagh, Milton, Ont., for almost 75 years and an active elder for more than 40 years. He served his Lord and church well in many capacities, including clerk of session, board of managers and church school superintendent. He is lovingly remembered by his family and friends.

ROSE, ROGER H., 82 years, lifelong, faithful member, former trustee, interested member of various church committees of Knox Church, Sudbury, Ont. Died Feb. 24, 2001. He will be greatly missed by family, friends and community.

STOREY, MAX, died Jan. 28, 79th year, served in Second World War as a lieutenant, famous auctioneer, Holstein farmer, Legion president nine years, 15 years on session at Rockwood Presbyterian Church, Rockwood, Ont.

WOOD, GEORGE THOMAS, 77, a very active, faithful member and elder, Knox Church, Harvey, N.B., Jan. 2, 2001.

INDUCTIONS and RECOGNITIONS

Young, Rev. John Peter, Knox, Ospringe, and Burns, Erin, Ont., March 25, 2001.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES and INTERIM MODERATORS

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Bass River, N.B., pastoral charge. Rev. Ralph MacKenzie, 106 Notre Dame, Atholville, N.B. E3N 3Z3.

Bathurst, N.B., St. Luke's. Rev. John Crawford, 7 Hierlihy Rd., Tabusintac, N.B. E9H 1Y5.

Charlottetown, Zion (assistant minister). Rev. Steven Stead, RR 4, Montague, P.E.I. C0A 1R0.

Hanwell, N.B., St. James. Rev. Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1M2; 506-455-8220; sapc@nbnet.nb.ca.

Merigomish, N.S., St. Paul's; French River. Rev. Charles McPherson, Box 132, Stellarton, N.S. B0K 1S0.

Miramichi, N.B., St. James. Rev. Philip Crowell, 206 Wellington St., Miramichi, N.B. E1N 1M7.

Montague, P.E.I., St. Andrew's; Cardigan, St. Andrew's. Rev. Roger MacPhee, Belfast Post Office, Belfast, P.E.I. C0A 1A0.

New Glasgow, N.S., St. Andrew's. Rev. Iona MacLean, Box 1003, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0; ionamac@auracom.com; 902-485-4298.

Riverview, N.B., Bethel. Rev. Martin Kreplin, 90 Park St., Moncton, N.B. E1C 2B3.

Saint John, N.B., St. Columba. Rev. Ted Thompson, 101 Coburg St., Saint John, N.B. E2L 3B7; 506-634-7765.

Scotsburn, N.S., Bethel; Earltown, Knox; West Branch, Burns Memorial. Rev. Jeanette Fleischer, Box 142, River John, N.S. B0K 1N0; 902-351-2777; jen.fleisch@ns.sympatico.ca.

Springhill, N.S., St. David's; Oxford, St. James; Riverview, St. Andrew's. Rev. Kevin Steeper, RR 2, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0; 902-485-8944; thesteepers@auracom.com.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Fort-Coulonge, Que., St. Andrew's; Bristol, Bristol Memorial. Rev. Milton A. Fraser, 80 Daniel St. N, Arnprior, Ont. K7S 2K8; 613-623-5531; standrew@storm.ca.

Kemptville, Ont., St. Paul's; Oxford Mills, St. Andrew's. Rev. Dr. William Klempa, 155 Ch. Lac Louisa N, Wentworth, Que. J8H 3W8; 450-533-5321; wklemp@po-box.mcgill.ca.

Melbourne, Que., St. Andrew's. Rev. Ross Davidson, 702 rue Lafontaine, Thetford Mines, Que. G6G 3J6; jrhdavidson@globetrotter.net.

Montreal, Robert Campbell Taiwanese (half-time English/Taiwanese bilingual assistant). Rev. Harry Kuntz, 92 Rockwyn Ave., Pointe Claire, Que. H9R 1W2.

Mount Royal, a suburb of Montreal (part time). Rev. Peter Szabo, 7110 de l'Epee, Montreal, Que. H3N 2E1.

Nepean, Ont., Parkwood (effective July 1, 2001). Rev. J.H.W. Statham, 1220 Old Tenth Line Rd., Orleans, Ont. K1E 3W7.

Ottawa, Westminster. Rev. Alex Mitchell, 2400 Alta Vista Dr., Ottawa, Ont. K1H 7N1.

Pierrefonds, Que., Westminster (part time). Mr. Elias Saikaly, 4373 Elgin, Pierrefonds, Que. H9H 1T9; e_saikaly@hotmail.com.

Synod of Toronto and Kingston

Ajax, St. Andrew's. Rev. E.J. Briard, 255 Wright Cres., Ajax, Ont. L1S 5S5.

Cambridge, Central. Rev. Mark Richardson, 10 Zeller Dr., Kitchener, Ont. N2A 4A8; kepc@golden.net.

Cambridge, St. Andrew's Hespeler. Rev. Wayne Dawes, 2 Grand Ave. S, Cambridge, Ont. N1S 2L2.

The Transitions column welcomes announcements of special events such as births, marriages, anniversaries, graduations, baptisms and the reception of new members, as well as death notices. The rate is $1 per word or $50 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.
All notices of pulpit vacancies, recognitions, ordinations and inductions will be charged to the congregation: $10 for the basic notice and $1 per word for additional information. (There will be no charge to congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.)
Contact the *Record* office regarding all items for the Transitions column.

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Fergus, St. Andrew's. Rev. Linda Bell, 2 Cross St., Elmira, Ont. N3B 2S4; drbell@execulink.com.

Guelph, St. Andrew's. Rev. William Johnston, 54 Queen St. N, Kitchener, Ont. N2H 2H2.

Maple, St. Andrew's. Rev. Bryn MacPhail, Box 164, 19 Stewart St., Beeton, Ont. L0G 1A0; 905-729-0055; bmacphal@netrover.com.

Markham, Chapel Place. Rev. George Beals, 10058 Yonge St., Richmond Hill, Ont. L4C 1T8. Potential candidates must have an intimate knowledge of Middle Eastern culture and be thoroughly fluent in Arabic and English.

Nobleton, St. Paul's. Rev. Sam Priestley, 143 Main St. N, Markham, Ont. L3P 1Y2.

Orillia, Orillia (St. Andrew's), (effective Sept./Oct. 2001). Rev. Donald McKillican, 99 Peter St. N, Orillia, Ont. L3V 4Z3.

Oshawa, Knox. Rev. Lois Whitwell, The Search Committee, 147 Simcoe St. N, Oshawa, Ont. L1J 4S6; gorddi@durham.net.

Port Carling, Knox; Torrance, Zion. Rev. Michael Barnes, 45 McMurray St., Bracebridge, Ont. P1L 2A1; 705-645-4521.

Puslinch, Duff's; Crieff, Knox. Rev. Don McCallum, 795 Scottsdale Dr., Guelph, Ont. N1G 3R8.

Scarborough, Clairlea Park (part time). Rev. Dr. Ian Clark, 3236 St. Clair Ave. E, Toronto, Ont. M1L 1V7.

Sudbury, Hillside-Knox pastoral charge. Rev. Dan Reeves, 1114 Auger St., Sudbury, Ont. P3A 4B2; 705-566-0652; calvinpc@hotmail.com.

Toronto, Calvin. Rev. G. Cameron Brett, 75 Simcoe St., Toronto, Ont. M5J 1W9; cbrett@standrewstoronto.org.

Toronto, Malvern. Rev. Duncan Cameron, 115 St. Andrews Rd., Toronto, Ont. M1P 4N2; d.cameron@sympatico.ca.

Toronto, Patterson. Rev. Gordon Fish, 15 Lambeth Rd., Toronto, Ont. M9A 2Y6.

Toronto, St. Giles Kingsway. Rev. John Borthwick, 2314 Islington Ave., Toronto, Ont. M9W 5W9; 416-741-1530; barley.is@home.com.

Toronto, Toronto Korean (full-time associate minister in charge of English-speaking ministry). Rev. Cheol Soon Park, 67 Scarsdale Rd., North York, Ont. M3B 2R2; 416-447-5963.

Toronto, Trinity York Mills. Rev. John Congram, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, Ont. M3C 1J7; jcongram@presbyterian.ca.

Toronto, Westminster. Rev. Nicholas Athanasiadis, 670 Eglinton Ave. E, Toronto, Ont. M4G 2K4; nathans@idirect.ca.

Tweed, St. Andrew's. Rev. A.D. MacLeod, 16 Marmora St., Trenton, Ont. K8V 2H5.

Unionville, Unionville Church. Rev. Robert Smith, 271 Centre St., Thornhill, Ont. L4J 1G5; tpchurch@aims.on.ca.

Uptergrove, Knox; East Oro, Essen; Jarratt, Willis. Rev. Tim Purvis, Box 26, Stayner, Ont. L0M 1S0; seraph@sympatico.ca.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Amherstburg, St. Andrew's (effective July 2001). Rev. Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9E 1Z5; 519-972-3627.

Appin, Appin Church; Melbourne, Guthrie. Rev. Brian Nichol, RR 1, Dutton, Ont. N0L 1J0; 519-762-3724; revrev@webgate.net.

Atwood, Atwood Church. Rev. Olwyn Coughlin, RR 1, Listowel, Ont. N4W 3G6; owacoughlin@earthlink.net; 519-291-1180.

Beechwood, St. Andrew's; Centre Road, Knox; Kerwood, West Adelaide. Rev. Kristine O'Brien, 152 Albert St., Strathroy, Ont. N7G 1V5; kristine@golden.net.

Listowel, Knox. Rev. Nicholas Vandermey, Box 663, Seaforth, Ont. N0K 1W0.

London, Elmwood Avenue. Rev. Andrew Human, 55 Hincks St., St. Thomas, Ont. N5R 3N9; revhuman@execulink.com.

Milverton, Burns; North Mornington. Search Committee, 66 Main St. N, Milverton, Ont. N0K 1M0.

Monkton, Knox; Cranbrook, Knox. Rev. Peter Bush, Box 235, Mitchell, Ont. N0K 1N0; 519-348-9080; knoxmit@quadro.net.

Petrolia, St. Andrew's; Dawn, Knox. Rev. Philip Wilson, PO Box 1381, Corunna, Ont. N0N 1G0.

Point Edward, Point Edward Church (part time). Rev. James Sloan, 268 Dantiki Ct., Corunna, Ont. N0N 1G0.

Priceville, St. Andrew's (half-time). Rev. Scott Sinclair, 865 Second Ave. W, Owen Sound, Ont. N4K 4M6.

Stratford, Knox. Rev. Rick Horst, PO Box 247, St. Marys, Ont. N4X 1B1.

Thamesville, St. James; Duart. Rev. Jack Neil, Box 1148, Ridgetown, Ont. N0P 2C0; 519-674-3487.

Windsor, Chinese (Cantonese-speaking, part time). Rev. Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9E 1Z5.

Windsor, Minister to begin a new outreach project near the University of Windsor. Rev. Hugh Appèl, Convener, Knox Presbyterian Church, 251 Duncan at Wellington, Wallaceburg, Ont. N8A 5G5; knox@kent.net.

Wyoming, St. Andrew's; Camlachie, Knox. Rev. Raymond Hodgson, 261 N. Christina St., Sarnia, Ont. N7T 5V4; 519-332-2662; raymond.hodgson@sympatico.ca.

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Carberry, Man., Knox-Zion. Rev. Gladys Anderson, Box 553, Neepawa, Man. R0J 1H0; Fax: 204-476-5387; gmander@escape.ca.

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fax 204-728-7037; fpc@escape.ca.
Fort Frances, Ont., St. Andrew's (half-time at present). Rev. Bert Vancook, 207 South Brodie St., Thunder Bay, Ont. P7E 1C1.
Kenora, Ont., First. Rev. Beth M. McCutcheon, 1476 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Man. R3G 0W3.
Thunder Bay, Ont., Calvin. Rev. Mark McLennan, 635 Grey St., Thunder Bay, Ont. P7E 2E4; markmac@lakehead.net.
Winnipeg, St. Andrew's-Calvin (joint charge seeking full-time minister). Rev. John Hogerwaard, 341 Eveline St. at McLean Ave., Selkirk, Man. R1A 1M9; 204-482-6425.

Synod of Saskatchewan

Swift Current, St. Andrew's (part time). Rev. Andrew Apack Song, Box 1295, Moose Jaw, Sask. S6H 4P9; apackson@home.com.
Yorkton, Knox; Dunleath. Rev. Deborah Lannon, 2170 Albert St., Regina, Sask. S4P 2T9; dalfor@dlcwest.com.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Calgary, St. Andrew's (co-minister, special responsibilities for youth, young adults, pastoral care). Rev. Kirk Summers, 290 Edgepark Blvd. NW, Calgary, Alta. T3A 4H4; 403-241-1443; ksummers@cadvision.com.
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Synod of British Columbia

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Castlegar, Grace. Rev. Doug Johns, Box 255, Creston, B.C. V0B 1G0; johnsy@kootenay.com.
New Westminster, Knox. Rev. Dr. J.H. (Hans) Kouwenberg, 2597 Bourquin Cres. E, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1Y6; calvinpresb@telus.net.
Vancouver, Central. Rev. Bruce McAndless-Davis, 1320 7th Ave., New Westminster, B.C. V3M 2K1; 604-526-4914; fax 604-543-7597; bruce@staidans.bc.ca.
Vancouver, Chinese (associate minister for English-language service). Rev. Robert Allison, 1179 Cloverley St., North Vancouver, B.C. V7L 1N7; Fax 604-988-4773.
Victoria, St Andrew's (senior minister). Rev. Brian Crosby, 2770 Murray Dr., Victoria, B.C. V9A 2S5; phone/fax 250-361-9396; brian_crosby@telus.net.

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called to wonder

Written by Erin Walton,
Youth Minister, First Church, Edmonton

Spring is here!

Flowers, birds, green grass and buds on trees are all signs that spring has arrived.
God created flowers and trees, animals and birds, and God created you and me, too!
God gave us the special responsibility of caring for the earth and all living creatures. This is called "stewardship."

I wonder ...
Can you think of 3 things you can do to care for water, land and air?

1.

2.

3.

The story of creation is full of wonder!
Read this amazing story in Genesis, Chapter 1. It will help you complete the crossword too!

Creation crossword

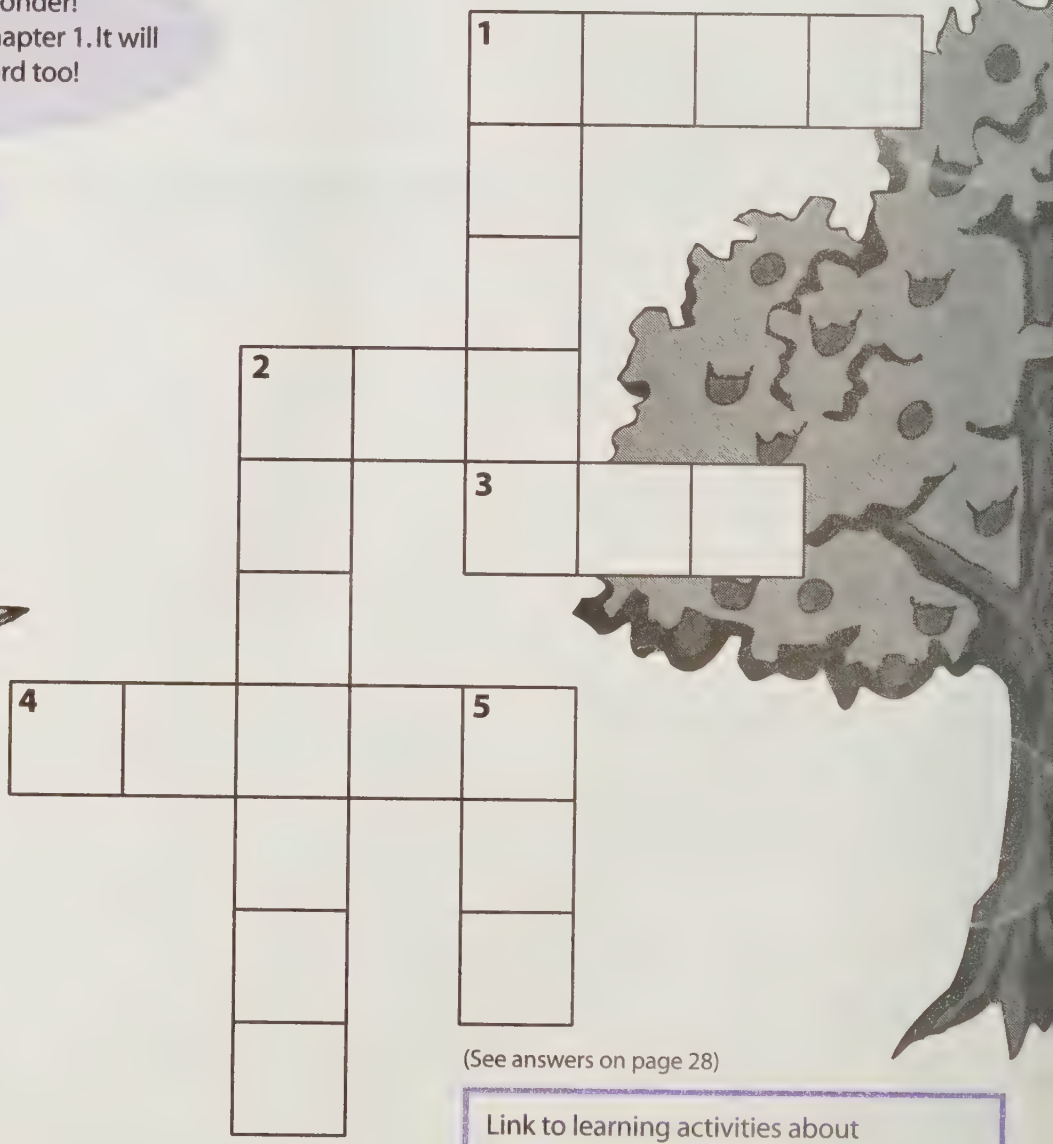
Down

1. They build nests in trees
2. First book of the Bible
5. Where fish swim

Across

1. Flowers before they bloom
2. Wonderful Creator
3. Where birds fly
4. These often bear fruit





(See answers on page 28)

Link to learning activities about the **Environment** online at:
www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html

Tom Dickey

Music in her soul

From her seat at the organ, Viola Arklie has witnessed generations come and go

Sixty-two. It's an age when most people are thinking about retirement. But for 92-year-old Viola Arklie, 62 is just about the right number of years to serve as a church organist. On October 8, 2000, she played the organ for the congregation of St. Matthew's Church, Grand Falls-Windsor, Newfoundland, for the last time. Appropriately, it was a Thanksgiving and Communion service.

Viola inherited her love of music from her father — if not his innate ability. A gifted musician, he was able to play any instrument by ear. She, on the other hand, endured (although, in her case, willingly) that common childhood experience — piano lessons. It is a testimony to Viola's longevity that her teacher was the pianist for the silent movies at the local theatre.

Viola has seen generations come and go. She has witnessed the great parade of the Christian family at baptisms, weddings and funerals. And she has enjoyed it all. She has a special fondness for her work with the church choir. Among her many memories is the time a new minister arrived at the church and placed a piece of paper with handwritten notes in front of a young, intrepid organist. "This is what I'm singing this morning," he told her. It was the first time Viola had played "How Great Thou Art."

Viola's love of music has been reinforced over the years by her travels with her husband, Robert. Wherever they went, the couple made a point of going to the local music halls, and they saw all the shows that came to town. "I love listening to piano music as much as I love playing it," says Viola, whose favourite musician was Liberace.

When she wasn't playing the organ at St. Matthew's, Viola found time to serve as president of the White Heather Guild and the WMS (of which she is currently treasurer). She was also actively involved in the Girl Guides of Canada as a Brownie and Guide leader, district and division commissioner, and trainer.

During the war years, Viola's fingers were put to good use with the Red Cross and the Women's Patriotic Association (WPA). She was a buyer for both organizations, purchasing material to make supplies for the war effort. The Red Cross met every two weeks to roll bandages, while the WPA members were busy knitting socks and sewing flannel pyjamas. "I must have made over 100 pairs of pyjamas," Viola says.



Photo: Wendy Houlihan

Although she recently retired after 62 years as organist of St. Matthew's Church, Grand Falls-Windsor, Nfld., Viola Arklie still feels at home at the keyboard.

Viola admits that, at her age, she should have retired earlier. "But you know how it is," she offers in her defence. "You keep on going and going, especially when you like playing." Retired or not, Viola Arklie is still going. You have the feeling that, should you have occasion to pass her home on a soft, summer evening, you just might hear the music to "How Great Thou Art" drifting through an open window — Viola at her Willis piano, an ornate candelabra on top. R

(Written with information from the *Advertiser*, a Grand Falls-Windsor, Nfld., newspaper.)

"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." ***2 Corinthians 9:7***



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Welcoming the children

page 14

Keeping faith in public life

My willingness to participate in such a dialogue stems from the fact I am a Christian and I practise my faith. While brought up as a young [Roman] Catholic during the Quiet Revolution [in Quebec], I have become not only a member of the Presbyterian denomination, but have been married and have had my children baptized in Saint Andrew and Saint Paul Church in Montreal. I cherish my home church.

— Daniel Turp, recently defeated Bloc Québécois MP, speaking at a dialogue between political and religious leaders

50 years ago

The *Toronto Star* reported the largest class (18) in many years would graduate from Knox College. Two of the members, Wayne Smith and Max Putnam, became Moderators of the church. Twelve were veterans of the Second World War.

— submitted by A. Laurie Sutherland



Children and religion

You can pump them full of Bible stories, but if they don't understand themselves to be a part of the body of Christ and an integral part … they won't be around much longer [than their parents absolutely insist that they must].

— Carol Wehrheim, *The Presbyterian Outlook*

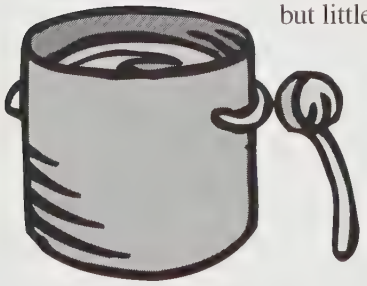
Respectable bigotry

The last respectable bigotry in the United States is against evangelicals and fundamentalists. It seems perfectly respectable to utter insulting language about them amongst people who would be ashamed of uttering the same sort of language about anybody else. The country will get over that. Usually, once you begin to point out a form of bigotry, some of the more fair-minded people begin noticing it, too, and start to correct it. This one will be harder to correct, but the correction will come.

— Michael Novak of the American Enterprise for Public Policy in Washington, D.C.

The pot thickens

The day after our church had a garage sale, where the children had a table for selling cookies and lemonade, our fund-raising group held a "mission meal" — soup and buns. Everyone was asked to bring something to add to a soup stock. A couple women took the two soup pots of stock from the fridge and put them on the stove. Ingredients were added as parishioners arrived, and one pot was designated to take all the potatoes. People raved about the potato soup, but little comment was made about the other one.



Midway through the meal, one of the members, who had helped at the garage sale the day before, poked his head into the kitchen. He said we didn't need to mix up juice for the children to drink — the lemonade left from the garage sale was in a big soup pot in the fridge.

— Lyn Hill, London, Ont.

Purpose of pastors

Pastors exist for the sake of the community of faith and, when their behaviour is injurious to their effectiveness as leaders of that community, their ministry as leaders has ended.

— William H. Willimon in *Calling and Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life*

North Americans spend as much on chewing gum as they give to missions.

— *Servant* magazine

John Congram



Are we homophobic?

Taking a second look at the 1994 Report on Human Sexuality

With General Assembly's Special Committee re Human Sexuality preparing to issue a study document in 2002 and to present its final report in 2003, it seems an appropriate time to say a few words on this subject. Although this committee is charged with looking at the whole question of human sexuality, the flash-point continues to be the issue of homosexuality, as was the case with the 1994 report.

Over the years, I have consistently defended our denomination from the charge, made by some, that we are a homophobic denomination. In their minds, the General Assembly's adoption of the Report on Human Sexuality in 1994, that prohibited practising homosexuals from becoming ministers, confirmed their suspicions that the Presbyterian Church is homophobic.

Among other things, the report states that a one-man, one-woman relationship in marriage should be normative for the church. It also declares that leaders of the church bear a special responsibility for reflecting and upholding that norm. Therefore, persons of homosexual orientation are expected to remain celibate if they wish to become ordained.

Unwillingness to confess that homosexuality is a gift from God equal to heterosexuality does not, in my mind, constitute a homophobic attitude. Nor does a church that wishes to model in its married leadership what it believes about Christian marriage.

However, having said that, I have experienced homophobic attitudes and behaviour too often among Presbyterians. I wish those who are so passionate on a subject about which Jesus said nothing would display at least as much passion about subjects on which he said a great deal — things like feeding the poor and hungry and working for justice for the marginalized and downtrodden.

As we move farther and farther down the road from the 1994 Report on Human Sexuality, people from all sides in the debate attribute to it things it did not say. It would be instructive if everyone would go back and read it carefully again, as I have during the past few days. What follows are a few examples of what it says and does not say.

The report does not condemn homosexual orientation or blame folk for being homosexuals. It explicitly acknowledges that "all persons are born somewhere along a continuum of sexual identity, from an exclusive heterosexuality at one extreme, to an exclusive homosexuality at the other."

The report urges the church to be a welcoming, loving and supportive community to all. That includes homosexuals. "The church," the report urges, "must listen to and share the very real pain of homosexuals and their families." It acknowledges that "the Christian Church has frequently shunned homosexuals and failed to minister to them and with them. The church as a whole," the report goes on, "must repent of its homophobia and hypocrisy."

Recent experience has taught me we still have some repenting to do when it comes to our attitudes and treatment of homosexuals. My dictionary says that homophobia is "a fear or dislike of homosexuals and homosexuality." I am afraid there is still a lot of fear and dislike of homosexuals in the church.

The report never claims for itself what many others claim for it, that it contains the final word on this subject. In adopting this statement in 1994, the General Assembly urged that the report be discussed by sessions, synods and presbyteries and that input from these discussions be included in the continuing reports of the Committee on Church Doctrine. Subsequent Assemblies set up a special committee to research and study further the whole subject of human sexuality. In this issue of the *Record*, a member of the committee, Andrew Foster, reflects on the journey of that committee to date.

This subject will not go away any time in the near future. Referring specifically to the homosexual issue, the report states: "The church should not seek to evade such issues, even if they are both complex and controversial." And, then, with a good deal more humility than many of us exhibit on this subject, the 1994 report concludes: "The implications of this report for pastoral care are far-reaching and deserve much more careful consultation and consideration than your committee has been able to give them. No Christian position on human sexuality can be considered definitive until such implications have been carefully and prayerfully thought through." The present committee will be attempting to help the church do some of this work.

John Congram

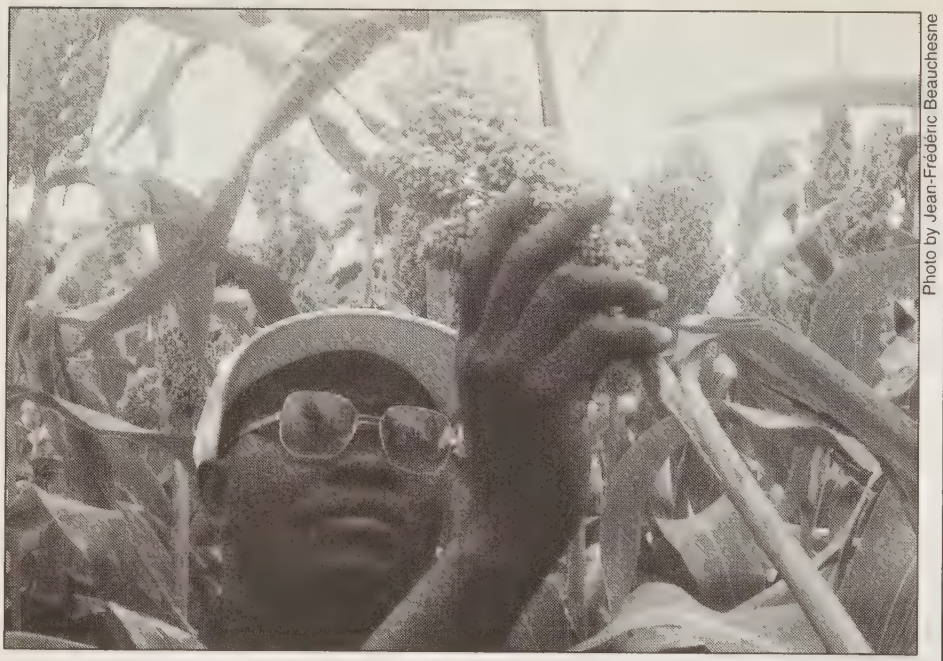


Photo by Jean-Frédéric Beauchesne

The "mtama" (sorghum) is almost ready to harvest. The vast green fields paint a very different picture than a year ago when drought left the people in Shinyanga, Tanzania, on the brink of famine — with little food to eat and no seed to plant another harvest. PWS&D, through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, responded to an emergency appeal from the Africa Inland Church of Tanzania (AICT), Diocese of Shinyanga. PWS&D and the CFGB provided AICT with funds to purchase 424 metric tonnes of food commodities and seeds. The food helped the people make it through a difficult season. The new improved drought resistant seed and decent rain mean that, this year, over 10,000 people are no longer hungry.

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A hospice love story • Reflections on April's battle of Quebec • All you need to know about the decisions of the 127th General Assembly

our cover

Suffer Little Children to Come unto Me (1874, 1934-1935). Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones (1833-1898). Hand-woven tapestry. 250 x 175 cm. England. Church of Saint Andrew and Saint Paul, Montreal. Though this scriptural event occurs in three of the four Gospels, portrayal of the Christian symbolism of innocence and trust inherent in the narrative is unusual in art.

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We would like to thank you for the copies of the *Presbyterian Record* we receive each month. Fenbrook Institution is a medium security facility that holds 300 to 400 inmates.

The prison chapel is a beautiful building that is open for use by all inmates of all religions (or lack of religion). Your generous contribution of the *Presbyterian Record* has been freely offered to everyone who visits the chapel. I have seen many of these copies picked up and taken back to individual cells.

We thank you for your help in providing Christian literature to our prison. May God bless and continue to use your ministry to reach those in need.

Jeremy Conway (inmate),
Fenbrook Institution,
Gravenhurst, Ont.

Editor's note: *When requested, the* ***Record*** *sends a number of free copies to penal institutions. We also urge congregations to do the same for institutions in their areas.*

Right on

Your April editorial was "right on" as the kids used to say. Rev. Phil Bigelow once said: "Expect the unexpected. God is the God of the unexpected." Or, as you put it, "Surprise!"

How true that our God is the God of unexpected surprises. Why do we continually underestimate what our loving and gracious God does and can do for us? Why does God surprise us? Why do we not expect God to act? Is it because we have "little faith"? Thanks for some salient and good thoughts.

Cassandra Wessel,
Kirkland Lake, Ont.

Shorter letters are more likely to be published and less likely to be edited

Unpleasant surprise

While surprises are sometimes pleasant, as your April editorial indicated, I was unpleasantly surprised to the point of dismay at the approval given President George W. Bush's meeting with Jim Wallis and others who are convinced that Mr. Bush "really wanted to help the poor." Perhaps Mr. Bush should turn to Scripture where he will find countless indications that two groups have a particular responsibility for helping the poor — government and wealthy people. His calling for "faith-based initiatives" is the worst kind of shirking of responsibility. If Mr. Bush wants help in finding where the Bible teaches the responsibility of government and wealthy people, he can start with: Exodus 22:25-27, Exodus 23:10-11, Leviticus 19: 9-10, Leviticus 23:22, Deuteronomy 15:11, Psalm 10:2-4, Psalm 72:12-14, Psalm 112, Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 16:19-31, Luke 18:18-30. He may find a few surprises.

Glenn Cooper,
Pictou, N.S.

Appreciating young people

I agree with Glen Davis that we should thank God that the youth are in church at all ("Stumbling blocks," April *Record*).

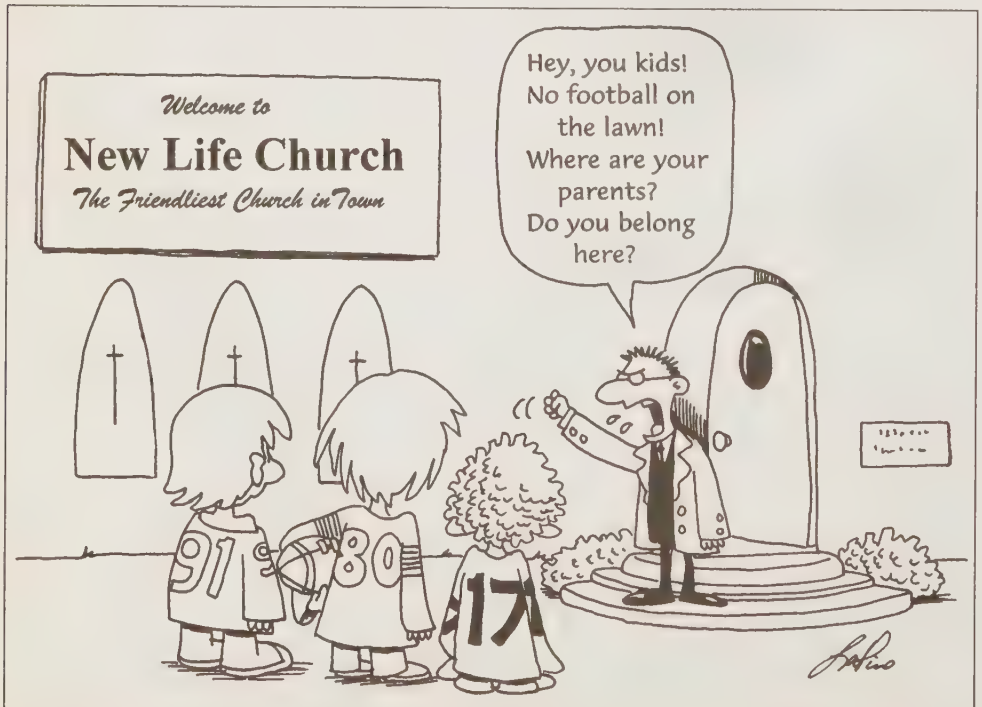
I am a part-time youth worker in a medium-sized, suburban congregation. We have many kind and giving people in our congregation. They love little children, even the noises. People smile, laugh and, sometimes, even applaud the amusing incidents of the smallest ones that inadvertently happen during the Christmas pageant!

I am sad to say, however, that I cannot say the same about the attitude of the adults to the youth. The young people are too noisy. The youth group leaves marks on the floor. Although the group has more than doubled in size in less than a year, we are told we are not visible. There is a handful of dedicated people, mostly parents, who tirelessly support everything the youth group wants to do. But the voices of opposition are often the loudest. We have worked hard to send an unprecedented number of young people to Triennium, yet we leave marks on the floor. We have been asked, and have agreed, to serve at nearly every congregational event and meal. We have done so to thank the generous ones.

Name withheld

Talking about death

Thank you for printing such a brave article ("Living with mortality" by David



Elder Walt Shold didn't always understand what it meant to be "*seeker sensitive.*"

Steele, April *Record*). Death is something we all must face; yet, we receive little training on what to do when it comes calling. In most cases, we try to run and hide, hoping it will go away. But it will not go away forever. Why is it that many Christians, with the hope and truth of resurrection, have as difficult a time with death as those without hope? It isn't morbid, weak, faithless or hopeless to talk about the things surrounding death before death comes. It is wise, necessary, brave and healing.

Sheila Hunt,
London, Ont.

Sins of omission

First, congratulations on the publicity for church camping in the April *Record*. I regret that Dorothy Lake Family Camp at Kirkland Lake, Ontario, was omitted from the list of church camps in the Synod of Toronto and Kingston. This omission, however, gives me the opportunity to bring some of its activities and benefits to the attention of *Record* readers.

The camp is set up on much the same basis as the provincial parks, with camping sites accommodating camping trailers, truck campers and tents. The program features morning worship, study, small group discussion and evening firesides with skits and singing. Everything focuses on family values. Afternoons are for family recreation on the beach or canoeing on Dorothy Lake, portaging to nearby lakes, hiking, and noon or evening cookouts.

The camp and program are structured to help families rebuild their spiritual lives. For more information, visit our Web site at www.dorothylake.on.ca.

Howard Salmon,
New Liskeard, Ont.

Lay ministers and the sacraments

The session of St. Andrew's, Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, discussed the paper on "The Ministry of Word and Sacraments." We agree that education should remain an important part of the preparation for ministry. We do, however, think there is a need to license lay pastors. They should be under the jurisdiction of presbytery

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Brad

comes to the Youth Drop-In almost every day. He has found the courage to discuss extremely difficult personal issues with us, particularly about being sexually abused at a very young age. Now an adolescent, he struggles with his sexuality and carries a lot of anger toward anyone who reminds him of his abuser. He is illiterate and has difficulty sustaining the commitment that an education requires. He uses drugs as an escape. At the Hall, we have tried to give him positive ways to release his anger and hurt. We provide a safe and respectful place where we encourage him to realize his true potential.

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and reviewed on a yearly basis. Consideration should be given to life experience, distance between charges, education and the ability of congregations to afford and/or obtain an ordained person.

We belong to a three-point charge (six years), connected within 150 kilometres and ministered to by a lay pastor. We are happy with our pastor who preaches, teaches, gives excellent pastoral care and is enrolled in a correspondence course in theology.

We have an interim moderator who oversees six congregations, including a two-point charge of her own. Needless to say, she is an extremely busy person. If our pastor could be licensed to provide the sacraments, this would be a great asset to our congregation, fulfilling for our pastor and a lessening of the workload for the interim moderator.

We would be interested to hear from other congregations on this subject.

Marguerite Hyndman,
Qu'Appelle, Sask.

Postscript to predestination

I add a postscript to Tony Plomp's discussion on predestination (You were asking?, March *Record*). It seems many Presbyterians are not aware that the 96th General Assembly received as "an interim answer" the paper "Election and Predestination" (Acts and Proceedings 1970, pages 289-292). This paper outlines the history of the doctrine and presents "The Biblical Doctrine of Election," challenging not only popular misconceptions but also some of the substance of *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. This interim answer is still on our books.

In addition, we have our latest subordinate standard, *Living Faith*, in which 3.6 points to our election and predestination in Christ. These two documents should help those who are struggling with this subject. Perhaps it is time for the current Committee on Church Doctrine to present a recommendation at a future General Assembly that the 1970 interim answer constitute our church's definitive position on election and predestination.

Nicholas Vandermey,
Seaforth, Ont.

Glen Davis



Free trade:
for profit or for people?

A visit to Mexico raises questions about the fairness of free trade

My last column as Moderator. I had hoped to write about the signs of hope I've seen across the church, and there are many. But I have recently returned from a heart-rending visit to Mexico, and I must keep my promise to deliver the message the people there asked me to convey.

"Don't give us hand-outs; just give us a fair playing field so we can compete"

An ecumenical delegation travelled to Mexico to learn firsthand the effects of free trade on the lives of ordinary people. We visited deep in the mountains of the Sierra Tarahumara, the plains of Chihuahua State and the factory (*maquila*) free trade zone in Juarez City. The people we met spoke openly, often painfully, of their struggle to live and to provide basics like food and shelter for their families.

For example, a courageous group of 40 poor people in a mountain village presented a simple letter to us. They expressed their desire that the cutting of their timberland be stopped because it is not serving the interests of the people. They also told us they cannot compete with wood coming in from outside the country under NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). It is 15 per cent cheaper than the wood they can produce.

Sister Maria Dolores (who runs a thriving community co-operative store): "Don't give us hand-outs; just give us a fair playing field so we can compete." She spoke of how basic food staples like corn and beans now come from the United States at cheaper prices than small farmers in Mexico can produce them.

Consuela (a woman from the village of Benito Juarez): "Here, the women are both women and men. Our husbands are forced to go away for months at a time to find work, so we take care of the children, animals and small crops. Our men cannot fulfil their roles as husbands and fathers … Mexico was not ready for free trade. When a poor man makes an agreement with a rich man, the poor one gets eaten up. Our backs and our spirits are broken."

Jose (a maquila worker who lives in the Anapra slum of Juarez City): "Salaries are far too low. We get $90 US per week. If we don't work extra shifts, we lose vacation time. The managers set impossible daily production quotas, then withhold bonuses when we don't meet them."

"Mexico was not ready for free trade. When a poor man makes an agreement with a rich man, the poor one gets eaten up. Our backs and our spirits are broken"

Maria (abused for 18 years by her husband before she ran away with her nine children, she works in a maquila and lives in a one-room "house" with two large beds, one burner and no running water): "I stand all day at my job, and it aggravates my back injury where my husband kicked me. I come home exhausted every night. If I have to take my sick child to a clinic, they deduct 43 pesos each time. I only earn 300 pesos a week."

Pedro (a young maquila worker who tried to organize a union independent of the government-controlled union): "When the vote was held, each worker had to go through a line of armed thugs into the manager's office and declare which union he or she was voting for. Of course, we lost the vote. Later, my car was run off the road and my face was cut open."

Mirela (a 22-year-old woman worker in a maquila): "I have to choose between buying clothes or eating. I work with solvents and I know my body is absorbing the chemicals. I know women who have had deformed babies, and I'm scared. I have no dreams for the future, only more of the same. Our dreams have been killed."

These are a few of the voices we heard. We remembered God's word in Exodus 3: "I have heard the cries of my people … and I have come down to deliver them." In that day, God used Moses to deliver the people. Who will be God's instrument of delivery today for the suffering people of Mexico?

After eight days in Mexico, I am no expert. Nor do I believe all the poverty in Mexico is caused by free trade. Nor am I against international trade; I know it is here to stay. But I also know free trade has not kept its promise that it is good

Knox Presbyterian Church Summer Fellowship 2001

Theme: Great Escapes

The world can be a dangerous place, filled with a variety of potential perils that threaten our bodies and our souls. But, again and again, the God of the Bible delivers and rescues his people, revealing his faithfulness to his children. Our theme this year, "Great Escapes," highlights some of the great biblical stories of divine rescue, and encourages us to renew our trust in God when dangers threaten our lives.

June 20: ***From Egyptian Armies*** (Exodus 14)
Dr. Robert Norris
Senior Pastor, Fourth Presbyterian Church, Bethesda, Maryland

*June 27: ***From Repeated Disaster*** (Genesis 37)
Dr. Clyde Ervine
Director, Pastoral Studies, The Presbyterian College, Montreal

July 4: ***From a Fiery Furnace*** (Daniel 3)
Dr. Mariano Di Gangi
Professor Emeritus, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto

*July 11: ***From Assyrian Might*** (Isaiah 36-37)
Dr. Michael Haykin, Professor of Church History,
Heritage Theological Seminary, Cambridge, Ontario

July 18: ***From a Lion's Den*** (Daniel 6)
Dr. Victor Shepherd
Chair, Wesley Studies
Tyndale Seminary, Toronto

July 25: ***From Herod's Plot*** (Matthew 2:13-23)
Rev. Jack Archibald, Minister
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Ottawa

August 1: ***From Enemies*** (John 10:22-42)
Dr. Donald Carson, Research Professor of New Testament
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois

August 8: ***From Prison*** (Acts 12:1-19)
Dr. Brian Rapske, Assistant Professor of New Testament,
ACTS Seminary, Langley, B.C.

August 15: ***From Shipwreck*** (Acts 27:9-44)
Dr. Murray Marshall, Minister Emeritus
First Presbyterian Church of Seattle, Washington

August 22: ***The Greatest Escape of All*** (Revelation 19 & 20)
Dr. Kevin Livingston, Senior Minister, Knox Church, Toronto

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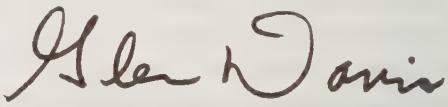
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for everyone. Some people benefit; many do not.

The real issue is how free trade can serve people. Clauses must be built into its agreements that guarantee workers will receive wages and benefits that provide a life of dignity, a life in which the basic rights of food security, adequate shelter, health care and education are guaranteed.

Many say it is not the church's business to get involved in issues of politics and economics. But we believe in a God who brought judgment on his people when they oppressed the poor. We follow a Saviour who declared he came to proclaim good news to the poor. History bears witness to the times when the church has been silent in the face of evil and injustice. Surely we do not want to repeat that silence.

Let our voices be heard in the corridors of power. Our representatives listen when enough people speak. Let the voices of the poor be heard at the negotiating tables. "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24).



This year of visiting our church from coast to coast has been a privilege beyond my deserving. I thank God for good health and strength. I thank the church for the opportunities and challenges. And I thank the members of Knox Church in Agincourt, Ontario, for their patience, encouragement and unfailing support during my frequent absences.

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R. Sheldon MacKenzie



Sounds we no longer hear

Over time, our sense of right and wrong can give way to all sorts of other noises

In my late teens many years ago, I was sent to a pre-Assembly congress held in Montreal. Those years, now far away, were some of the most impressionable in my life. I made the trip with a family member, Rev. Herbert Buntain. A former student in Montreal, he was an excellent guide to the city. Because I had not been more than a few miles from home, Montreal was an unreal, unforgettable place. It was a wonder-filled visit to a great city that has coloured my views of it ever since.

The theme speaker at the congress was a young man from Scotland. In addition to his three addresses, there were services of worship, talks and discussions from people in leadership positions across the church.

The highlight was an address given by the theme speaker. He began by telling us of his annual holiday at a family summer cottage by the sea. The setting for the cottage was very quiet, especially at night. The seaside, silent except for the distant sound of the waves, was in sharp contrast with the usual street noises in Edinburgh. But the first week to 10 days at the cottage were always times when neither he nor his wife found it easy to sleep. The principal problem came from the loud and persistent squeaking of bats against the absolute silence in the cottage.

During those early nights, sleep came slowly. And, then, only for short periods. And, yet, after a little time, and so gradually they could not have told you when it happened, they no longer heard the squeaking at all. They slept soundly and restfully, and wondered how they would ever sleep again in Edinburgh. As the summer went on, they noticed the squeaking of the bats *only* when visitors remarked they were unable to sleep because of it. The sounds were still there all the time, certainly; but, the minister and his wife had become so used to them, they no longer heard them.

Similarly, a retired couple moved to a house about a mile from the train tracks. Every night, two or three freight trains blew their whistles or horns at four crossings before reaching their destination at a huge steel mill. The farther away the train went, of course, the less they heard it. Eventually, after some weeks, without knowing when, they no longer heard the trains. They slept as they might have done in a country cottage by the sea. They were reminded of the noises of the freight trains *only* when guests from a huge, noisy city came to stay. These people slept fitfully the first few nights. At breakfast each morning, they told their hosts of the difficulty they were having in getting a proper rest.

There is an analogy here, the theme speaker said, to the way in which we



Given time, we no longer hear the squeaking of the bats or the whistle of the freight trains

allow our consciences to be dulled. He spoke of times when his conscience was deeply disturbed by some injustice in the church, in the university and in the wider community beyond Scotland. Given time, these concerns were no longer at the surface of his thinking. His conscience became dulled — just as, given time, we no longer hear the squeaking of the bats or the whistle of the freight trains. Over time, our sense of what is right and wrong gives way to all sorts of other noises. Perhaps, self-promotion at the expense of others. It happens. Maybe taking advantage of the goodness of those less fortunate than ourselves. That happens, too. All these are easier noises to hear.

Is conscience that place in life where "all the pieces fit together as they should"? A strong, well-informed conscience becomes the ground on which we confront God. The loyal conscience of a Christian both governs life and offers to give it direction. It has authority as well as truth. It covers the whole of life — not merely those areas we call religious. It includes, as well and primarily, our civil obligations and whatever other matters appear to us as purely "personal choice."

The conscience of a Christian is a source of authority in his/her life. But it is not the final authority. The ultimate authority is always God, whose will comes to us through a conscience shaped by the life and teaching of Jesus. And not to listen to it, because we have become so used to it that, as with the squeaking of the bats or the sounds of the train, we no longer hear it, is to blur the distinctions between right and wrong. "Our conscience," wrote someone, "is always open to corrupting influences, no matter how well-educated and developed it may be."

We believe in God. We pray that God may speak to us, with respect to our beliefs and behaviour, through our conscience, increasingly attuned to his voice within. R

R. Sheldon MacKenzie, who now lives in New Glasgow, N.S., is a retired professor from Memorial University in St. John's, Nfld., and a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

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pastoral epistles from peter plymley II

My dear editor:

Our presbytery was asked to support an "Old-Fashioned Revival Crusade and Soul-Winning Camp Meeting Under a Tent." The suggestion came from Hiram P. Horsham, a representative elder newly minted and already a pious nuisance. At his debut meeting, every time presbytery had to deal with an issue that prompted a division of opinion, however mild, Hiram leapt to his feet and bellowed "Worduh-prayermoderator!" and instantly proceeded to inform the Lord (or "Looordah") what we were doing and that we were not of one mind and needed help.

Out of politeness or practice or both, Presbyterians have been conditioned not to interrupt prayers. Even long, unctuous and endlessly repetitive prayers. As the moderator this year has not been one of our strongest, the meeting lengthened. The tea laid on for our break stewed, and so did presbyters.

Finally, the clerk rose on a point of order, pointing out that the court could only be called to unite in prayer by the moderator. He quoted from a section of our "Standing Orders." No one dared look it up in case he was wrong. To be fair, Hiram *had* united the presbytery — albeit in loathing of him.

It was probably in the nature of throwing a bone to a disgruntled dog or, possibly, because the court subsequently became tired of hearing how well the "Eeevangellicull" churches were doing that we agreed to send a committee to the neighbouring county where an "Old-Fashioned Revival Crusade and Soul-Winning Camp Meeting Under a Tent" had been booked. We were especially tired of hearing about The Full Gospel Church of the True and Inerrant Word, a congregation in Hiram's neighbourhood that "has new members and young people comin' out their wazzoo!" He always ended his appeals with: "All we do is talk about growin' congregations! If talk were enough, we'd a had enough of *that* kind a fertilizer to grow a new denomination. It's time we got off our duffs and *did* some soul-winnin'!"

Miriam Duff looked daggers at him. The moderator winced and mumbled something about "cultural context." And we breathed a collective sigh when it was over, for this evening anyway.

> *The revival may have been billed as "old-fashioned," but the tent was made of shiny, space-age material, inflated by a blower*

So our advance scouting party found itself in the field near a strip mall, on the outskirts of a small town not far from our precincts. We arrived mid-afternoon, in time to see the "tent" go up.

The revival may have been billed as "old-fashioned," but the tent was made of shiny, space-age material, inflated by a blower and held up by air pressure. It even had a steeple of sorts, the last section to be inflated — a process Miriam (who made sure she was on the committee) thought "rather rude."

The evening enhanced the mix of sawdust trail and modern technology. There were a lot of hymns and choruses awash in blood, the first person pronoun and the furniture and haberdashery of heaven (a.k.a. "Glory" or Beulah Land"). The band, heavy in the tambourine section, featured an accordion, two electric guitars, electronic keyboard and drum machine.

The praise leader was animated as one might expect, several notches above Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders. When he felt we were sufficiently warmed up, the star of the evening appeared, preceded by members of the local clergy looking sheepish and trying to sing "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound / That saved a wretch like me" while simultaneously picking their way to their seats on stage.

The evangelist's performance was true to stereotype as well, though his sermon orbited around a text from Revelation 19:15: the sharp sword issuing from the mouth of the rider on the white horse with which he would "smite the nations." To emphasize his point, he produced a sword from behind an amplifier and waved it about his head. It cut the air close to the skin of the inflated tent. (We noticed patches had already been sewn in that area, but I suspect the tent was *never* punctured.) Our attention was certainly held.

It was riveted when the first person forward at the "altar call" was Hiram. He hadn't noticed us (nor we him). When he did, his progress to the "mercy seat" slowed, but it was too late. He had no choice but to continue "straight into the arms of Jeessusss." Subsequently, we learned he made a practice of going forward at every opportunity. "I don't like to discourage them" was the only explanation we got.

When presbytery failed to offer official support to the "Old-Fashioned etc." and left it up to each individual and congregation, Hiram was strangely silent.

Yours evangelically,

Peter Plymley II



Meeting the ch

How Presbyterian congregations reach out to children and young people

Reaching children in Pictou, Nova Scotia

Why not join us in an exploration of a fascinating place called the Kingdom of God!

Kids love being part of things, feeling they belong, learning they are important and that they can make a difference. In Kids of the Kingdom Club, we explore God's world through every activity of life. On a typical day at the club, kids visit the food corner, then take a journey to games corner and music corner to express themselves through play and song. After a quieter journey through worship corner, Bible corner and covenant corner, they finish by exploring mission corner and crafts corner.

What of this could possibly interest healthy three- to 11-year-olds while teaching them wonder upon wonder? What is there to excite children who know little about the church or about Jesus Christ?

Maybe the food and conversation at the beginning help. We eat, share table talk and listen to stories from the kids' day before introducing the theme for the meeting. We take our journey together with imagination and flair — going to far-away places or around the corner using camels and cars and, even, crawling. Why? Because it's fun!

Games corner always has a surprise or two and more than one connection with life's lessons. The game "Mother, May I?" is simply a prelude to "Rules, rules, why all the rules?" that teaches the Ten Commandments. The game "Helpers and Hurters" prepares for a world where abuse and violence take place. (Yes, topics like family violence and child abuse belong because they are part of children's lives.)

Singing is a powerful way to learn. We sing about God, about following Jesus, about the church. Our songs are from long ago and those we write ourselves.



Photo: Audrey Cameron

The Kids of the Kingdom Club.

I wish my church were a mess!

Yes, I wish my church were a mess,
but it's not.

I wish I had toys to find, hidden in cracks
and crevices around the pews and on
the floor.
I wish I had big doodles and bigger
scrawls on papers posted on the walls.
I wish my church were a mess, but it's not.

I wish I were scrubbing crayon from the
floor and pencil from the door.
I wish the gum were dried and old under
the seat.
I wish my church were a mess, but it's not.

I wish the chairs were tipped and turned
down in the meeting hall.
I wish dirty cups filled the sink and
crumbs were all over the floor.
I wish my church were a mess, but it's not.

I wish the classrooms were in chaos with
paper, books and Bibles askew.
I wish I had to scrub the entranceway,
removing footprints deep in mud.
I wish my church were a mess, but it's not.

Yes, I wish my church were a mess,
but it's not.
You see, the children are gone and the
grey hairs are clean,
The place is spotless and everything shines.
On Sundays the sanctuary is dust-free —
and empty.

I wish my church were a mess, but it's not.

— an ode from a church custodian
by Ken Stright, who pretends to be
a janitor on his good days

allenge

The final article in the series focusing on ministry with children, teens and young adults

All are raised in praise in the Kingdom.

Shhh! *"Be still and know ... "* The mood of the meeting quiets and the club comes together in the Inner Kingdom. We join hands and begin worship. We worship, first, by talking about life, love, what we are thankful for, what makes us afraid and what we hope will happen when we grow up. We give all our prayers to God. Bible corner follows naturally with reflections on where everything came from, why there are so many languages, how to be friends with Jesus, what the Christian Year looks like up close and every topic under God's sun. Stories, dramas, radio interviews, pantomimes, plays and many other methods of communication are used to tell the story and learn the lesson.

Covenant corner helps us understand those big "churchy" words that often hold little meaning for those inside and outside the church alike. We take time to figure them out and make them part of our everyday language.

How is what we learn lived out? Mission corner can take us around the world but, just as easily, to the corner down the street to help clean up the mess there, share in the work of the food bank or visit the seniors home and share the good news of Jesus' Kingdom with the residents.

We reach children outside the church by not boring them and by exciting those inside the church. We reach them by being accessible in time, place and program. We reach them by offering something solid to children who have little that is firm to hold onto. Impossible in this day and age? No, but it takes work and commitment and prayer and imagination and ... Wait a minute! Maybe you've just entered the Kingdom of God through the door of Kids of the Kingdom. Welcome!

Ken Stright is minister of St. Andrew's Church, Pictou, N.S.

An inner-city mission

A ministry to inner-city children and young people in Hamilton, Ontario

Discovery Club had finished for the night. I looked across the park at the busy scrap-yard working a late shift, and I could see the smoke billowing from the smokestacks in Hamilton. The cold and rain fogged up my glasses as I laid my head against the bricks of the church and cried. I had finished working with the excessively active children's group. It had been a night with seemingly no accomplishment, only squabbles and altercations. Even the church mail had been taken, ripped and strewn across the park. I was frustrated and discouraged. Tonight, the children seemed unreachable. I called out to God for help.

An outreach ministry to the inner city of Hamilton began more than 25 years ago. Revs. Gordon Fish and Helen Allum had an earnest desire to reach the community for Christ. Helen's love and concern for the community was contagious; I soon started a basketball club. As my coach and mentor, Helen helped me understand what it meant to express love and servanthood. When she left to pastor a church, I took over as director.

Since then, God has been doing marvellous things in Hamilton's inner city. With so many young people in the programs today, we now have 35 dedicated, compassionate leaders. For the past 14 years, we have worked with St. David's Presbyterian Church on Wentworth Street. Being a faith ministry, we totally rely on God to meet all of our needs. Based on I John 3:17-18, we strive to answer God's call to see both word and deed, evangelism and mercy, as means to meet the physical and spiritual needs of Hamilton's inner-city families.

This ministry reaches a large area. Ten thousand people live within 15 city blocks gridlocked with railway tracks and industry. About 250 children, teens and young adults are actively involved in a variety of weekly programs. Children, six to 14, are invited to participate in after-school Kids Club, Discovery Club, Kids for Christ, a literacy program and junior boys basketball.

A weekly girls club and senior boys basketball reach ages 14 to 22. The groups meet together each month for a fellowship event. Once a year, many of the young people get away from the pressures of life and enjoy nature at a winter retreat. In the quiet countryside, they discover God is real and that God speaks to them.

Christmas dinners, hamper programs and children's camping are offered to the community. There are many impoverished and hurting families in this area. Last year, 60 families received Christmas hampers, 200 attended a Christmas dinner and 300 children received gifts. In July and August, 100 young people benefited from summer camp.



Teen retreat.

Wonderful volunteers serve faithfully week by week. Generous people give their time to drive kids to camp. Rev. Barry Luxon and St. David's Church keep this work in prayer continually, generously supporting all endeavours and patiently working through the bumps and bruises. Many area churches support this work through prayer and donations of food, clothing, knitted items, hampers, Bibles and finances. These special people give of themselves unconditionally. And unconditional love melts hearts and removes objections. Some people don't want to hear the gospel; they are even hostile to it. Yet, in giving a cookie, a pair of mitts or a piece of furniture, we extend the Master's hand. God provides an opportunity to share the gospel.

The outpouring of love from a child is so intense it is overwhelming at times. Yet, the next week, that same child can be disobedient, angry and uncontrollable. Their lives are unpredictable and transient. Many are victims of physical or sexual abuse. Others fall prey to the drugs and alcohol that are so readily available. Crack houses are common in this area. Prostitution is always around the corner. There are many gangs, so the potential to be stabbed or shot is always a concern. Teen pregnancy is at an all-time high. Temptation, peer pressure or plain boredom have caused many young men to end up in jail. Their crimes range from arson, assault, break and enter, and car theft to high-speed chases. Young teens think they will never get caught. But they may spend up to one year in jail, two years probation, and up to 100 hours of community service. While visits to the jail are cold and antiseptic, bringing God's Word into the jail is enjoyable. We thank God none of our young men have reoffended in the past year.

Sometimes, the young people come with their sorrows and secrets. It may be the loss of a kitten or failing a class. Unfortunately, it is often more serious. One day, Janey* and Sandy* quietly revealed they had been raped by an uncle. He also threatened their brother at gunpoint not to tell anyone.

Children need to know someone is willing to believe in them and to challenge them to reach their potential. These are amazing kids with many talents. They need an opportunity to discover their capabilities. Bobby* arrives each week agitated and angry, hitting anyone who gets in his way. He says he is a bad boy and deserves to be punished. Because he won't listen and won't take part, he is often sent home early. But, last night, Bobby read the Bible and helped with snacks. What made the difference? Involvement, compassion and encouragement. Bobby is beginning to realize there are people in his life who believe in him and accept him as he is. But, more than that, he is learning about God's unlimited, unconditional love.

It is amazing to see God at work in the lives of the teens. Dan* has been in and out of jail since he was 14. Now, at 17, he is finally getting his life together. He wrote a letter, saying: "Thanks for helping me … Thanks for teaching me about God … for always being there to talk to … I started to respect my parents because of you … You saved my life." Young people call day and night craving attention and looking for guidance. Sally* calls frequently for advice about her problems, including her pregnancy. Every day, God makes a difference!

When considering a ministry such as this, begin by asking, as Jesus did, who is my neighbour? Look at the communities surrounding your church. Your neighbour may be the fellow at the gas station or a single mom across the street. Heed God's call to be their Good Samaritan. Be constant in prayer. Give everything to the Lord and, then, watch God work! In surrendering all to Jesus, the Holy Spirit can begin to work in our churches and communities.

If you are interested in developing this type of ministry but need help getting started, the MacVicars would be pleased to offer their services. Contact Carole and Don at 905-664-2838 or by e-mail at chariotsoffire@hwcn.org.

** names changed to protect privacy*

Don and Carole MacVicar co-ordinate an inner-city mission to children and youth in Hamilton, Ontario.

Remote ministry in Kirkland Lake, Ontario

Remaining flexible to meet changing needs

"You mean, you mean … God got Jesus alive? You mean, you mean, God and Jesus is the same!" piped up five-year-old Adrian. It was Family Saturday worship time, and we were discussing what Easter is all about — not bunnies and candy eggs, but Jesus risen and alive.

We had already made Easter baskets from quart-sized plastic strawberry containers with ribbons woven through the ribs and pipe cleaner handles. We had coloured Easter eggs. We had played games in our large church basement — games like pop the balloon and three-

legged races. Dad and son, mom and daughter, linked together at the knees with sashes of old scarves, raced for the finish line while the air was punctuated with shouts of "No fair carrying him!" We had shared a meal of shepherd's pie, salad and drink boxes or tea.

Now, we were gathered around a table spread with a Communion cloth. Each child had been given something to bring up at the appropriate time in the service to place upon the table. A cruse of oil, a palm branch, long railroad spikes, a carafe of water and a towel — these and more were brought in turn. Each item represented part of the Holy Week story. As we came to the part about Jesus being risen from the tomb, Adrian's "aha" moment voiced in simple child's language the profoundest truth of the Christian faith: Jesus is risen!

This Family Saturday had been a rousing success. But others had been difficult. Dad or mom had to work so they had to miss or were late. (People have to work when there is work to be had in our town.) All the children got sick — flu, colds, chicken-pox. We had to be flexible and adapt. Life happens.

Our challenges here at St. Andrew's, in our remote Northern Ontario town, are like those of an inner-city church but on a smaller scale. Our people are economically disadvantaged. Many are disabled, underemployed or on fixed pensions. So programs for children and youth present challenges. Because funding is a challenge, everything must be done with found or donated objects. We cannot buy



Snack time at the mid-week children's club.

expensive programs so we create them. But that is half the fun! We can tailor-make programs to fit changing needs.

Recently, Family Saturday has given way to mid-week children's clubs. We have a boys club for ages six to 11 and a girls club for ages 11 to 14. The boys club is run by two faith mission volunteers working in our community. The boys play active games to work off some excess energy, then sing songs, play memory verse games and finish with a treat — which must be earned by gaining enough points for good behaviour!

The girls club is based upon the CGIT (Canadian Girls in Training) model. We have a devotion, play games, bake and sew. We are currently working on a banner. Some of the girls play a musical instrument which they bring to meetings for the sing-along time. We are also currently working on a penny drive for the local hospital chapel project. Mothers help with this club, sharing their skills with the girls.

Our Family Sunday, when the children did simple Scripture readings and took up the offering, was well-attended by younger families as was our Christmas Eve pageant which the children from the clubs presented. Because some children and their parents have no connection with any church, our children's programming has been an outreach into the community to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to hear it.

We don't have "a model" we use. We try to remain flexible and fit our programming to current needs. The programs described here are what our church has done over the past two or three years to reach people in the community.

Cassandra Wessel is the minister of St. Andrew's Church, Kirkland Lake, Ont.



Knox Church in Victoria had a happy get-together luncheon with secret pals. Five months earlier, 13 members of the congregation and 13 Sunday school children teamed up as secret pals. They corresponded and exchanged little gifts, getting to know each other through letters signed with their secret names. At the luncheon, people wore name-tags bearing their secret names (Pooh Bear, Terminator, etc.). They found their secret pals and sat with them at the tables for lunch supplied by the parents and adult secret pals. This was a way to connect with the children and make them aware adults do care about them and their spiritual welfare. Pictured: *(left)* Grace Yang (11) with Nan Chudley and *(right)* Richard Goulet (11) with Robert Goodwin.

— Edyta Sahlen



The mentor program

Making a positive impact in communities of small-town Ontario

Building a birdhouse, baking muffins, flying kites, shooting hoops — these are some of the activities at Bosanquet Central School near Thedford, Ontario, whenever mentors are in the building. The activities are bridges to the real task of the mentor program: creating friendships, providing a solid adult role model, offering a positive in-school experience and encouraging kids to be their best.

Chris O'Reilly, pastor at Knox Church in Thedford and St. Andrew's Church in Watford, Ontario, has had ongoing involvement in the schools in both communities. Aware of needs in the schools and communities, she was encouraged to hear of a program operated by the Big Brothers of Sarnia-Lambton called The Mentor Program. This program matches adults with students who would benefit from a one-on-one relationship with a caring, responsible adult at the school. This relationship encourages the students' self-esteem, social skills and attitude toward school.

After approval from school administration, staff and school council, Chris sought people to serve as mentors. The two congregations embraced the program, with 12 volunteers serving as mentors. Students were eligible for the program based on staff recommendations and parental permission. Working with Big Brothers staff, Chris arranged matches of adults with students. "Knowing both the adults and the students has helped make the matches successful," she says. "I can pair mentors and their buddies based on personality and interests."

Mentors spend an hour a week with their student buddies during school time. Students look forward to "mentor day." They enjoy knowing their mentors have made a special effort to be present for school assemblies, plays and field days.

Mentors also speak of the benefits of the program: "I believe it makes a difference." "I enjoy the time we spend together as much as she does!" "There are some needy children out there … if I can help just one, it's worth it." "It's a way to live out my Christian faith — showing compassion, offering guidance and help for a child."

School staff have noted the positive aspects of the program for the students. They also sense the community cares about the school and is aware of the activities and opportunities there. The support of Knox and St. Andrew's churches to the school has increased over the years and is well-received. With school closures in the Watford-Warwick community and the creation of a new elementary school in Watford, the establishment of The Mentor Program at East Lambton Elementary School will be on the agenda for the coming months. And, no doubt, Presbyterians will be well-represented as the baking, basketball and building continue!

Chris sums up the program in this way: "The goal of our involvement is not, primarily, evangelism or increasing our numbers but making a positive impact in the community. However, involvement in the school has resulted in new people coming to the church. It is both an opportunity and a challenge to do ministry in a secular setting with little or no overt religious content."

From a report submitted by Chris O'Reilly, minister of Knox, Thedford, and St. Andrew's, Watford, Ont.

Shining in London

How one church reaches out to young people in the community

"Be quiet! She's coming!" Members of SHINE youth group at Trinity Community Church, Presbyterian, in London, Ontario, were attempting to quiet the chatter of about 30 peers. They were planning a surprise party for Lynne Turner, their leader.

She arrived, blindfolded, and was met with shouts of "Happy birthday." She was asked to kneel on the floor. A water-filled balloon was placed on her head, then pricked with a pin. The youth declared this pay-back time! The weekly games Lynne organizes sometimes involve water, Jell-O or shaving cream. These games are a starting point for spirited discussions on such diverse topics as trust, greed and forgiveness.

What keeps everyone coming back? "Youth don't know where they belong," Lynne says, "but, here [at SHINE], they are developing a sense of family." She makes sure everyone's birthday is celebrated with a cake. The youth recipro-



The SHINE group presents the sermon as a play.

cated with a home-made cake for her.

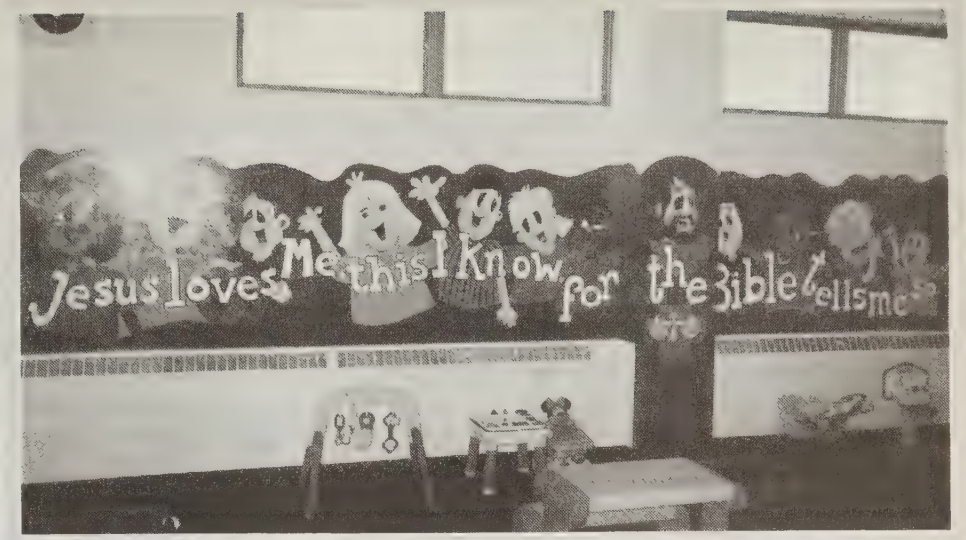
The initial SHINE group consisted of eight youth, two of them Lynne's own teens, Andrew, now 16, and 14-year-old Emily. Currently, almost three dozen teens meet every Friday evening in the basement of Trinity Church. Most have no affiliation with Trinity but heard about SHINE through word of mouth.

Although newcomers are tentative at first, most return week after week. Twins John and George Vicencio, 17, agree, "These are the people we want to hang around with." Both boys now regularly attend the Sunday service at the church.

All the youth give Lynne high marks for her leadership. According to Erin Perry, 15: "The youth know she puts a lot of time into preparation for the weekly gatherings. She also has a lot of patience to put up with us."

In November 2000, two dozen SHINE members attended "Acquire the Fire" — a youth conference in Hamilton. After seeing God working in the lives of others, a small group decided to gather for an hour prior to their regular meeting time. Trinity's pastor, Mark Turner, assists his wife, Lynne, with the Mountain Climbers. Parishioner Dennis Girard plays the guitar for this dynamic group.

The teens share in a time of singing and personal testimony, and learn how to be active ministers to their peer group. The Turners have instituted old-fashioned "sword drills" that encourage familiarity with the Bible. As the small group reached out to others, the numbers grew.



This colourful painting on the wall of the nursery at St. Giles, Sarnia, Ont., was created by Patti Welsh.

Now, 15 or more youth meet to discuss questions such as "How is the Word of God relevant for my life today?"

SHINE organized a number of Sunday worship services, usually presenting the sermon as a play. They re-enacted the Easter story with passion. On Mother's Day, four youth pretended to be young children. Using real ingredients, they made a surprise pancake breakfast for their "parents." What a mess they made! But they cheerfully cleaned it up after the service.

SHINE recently held an "all-nighter." They played indoor beach volleyball and spent the rest of the night in their meeting room. Some slept. Some didn't. In the morning, parishioner Clair McDougall made pancakes for the youth and chaperones.

During a "50-Day Adventure" series, Will Kinchlea played the part of Sammy Wannalot, a young man looking for eternal life. For eight weeks, Sammy took all the Sunday school children through a time tunnel that transported them back to Bible times. The youth played the parts of biblical characters such as Adam and Eve, Moses and Paul. Eventually, Sammy met Jesus and discovered what it means to have eternal life.

SHINE is also busy in the community and church. Members worked at the local food bank, provided child care during the annual meeting and served dinner to visitors from presbytery.

SHINE is geared for youth in Grade 9 or higher. When the junior youth heard how much fun SHINE was having, they felt left out. Salt of the Earth was started for students in grades six through eight. SOTE meets weekly under the direction of 16-year-old SHINE members Will Kinchlea and Kerstyn McDougall. Lynne Turner is the adult facilitator. For an hour-and-a-half on Wednesday evenings, 14 to 16 young people meet for games and discussions with a Christian theme. Kinchlea says, "We discuss issues important to their age such as fitting in, friends and helping others.

SHINE is a wonderful role model in the church, not only for the children but for the adults as well. Their commitment to God, to the church and to each other is a beacon of light in today's world. R

Lyn Hill is a member of Trinity Church in London, Ont.

For further reflection and action

- As you read these articles, what common features in the various approaches to ministry with children and youth can you identify?
- What features of the situations described are similar to your congregation? How?
- What can you learn from these articles that you can apply to your congregation? How do you propose to do this?

Essential books for ministry with children and youth

God, Kids, & Us: The Growing Edge of Ministry with Children and the People Who Care for Them by Janet Marshall Eibner and Susan Graham Walker, United Church Publishing House and Anglican Book Centre, 1996.

Teaming Up: Shared Leadership in Youth Ministry by Ginny Ward Holderness with Robert S. Hay, Westminster John Knox, 1997.

The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul-Tending for Youth Ministry by Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster, Upper Room, 1998.

Family-Based Youth Ministry: Reaching the Been-There, Done-That Generation by Mark DeVries, InterVarsity, 1994.

Beyond Leaf Raking: Learning to Serve/Serving to Learn by Peter L. Benson and Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, Abingdon, 1993.

Yankee Doodle



by Margaret Brouillette

Music can maximize your ministry with children

Try to finish this sentence: "Yankee Doodle went to town, riding … " Or this one: "Twinkle, twinkle, little star … " How about: "Jesus loves the little children, all … " How did you score?

We learned those rhymes in childhood and still remember them, even if we can't remember the phone number we learned yesterday. Why? What do a pony, a star and the love of Jesus have in common? Music.

Music is a dynamic teaching tool that we need to maximize in ministry for three reasons. Music helps communicate the truth to *multiple learning styles*, it implants truth in the *memory* and music allows us to follow the *model*.

Multiple learning styles

Ever notice that Emily looks you in the eye when you stand up to speak, but Brent always turns away? He's tapping his foot and drawing pictures. Joanne is filling in the answers in her workbook, and Ryan is butting in, trying to anticipate what you are going to say before you say it. When several things start happening at once, Brent perks up and starts participating, but Emily looks bothered and confused.

We are told there are at least seven ways to learn (*Frames of Mind* by Howard Garner and *The Way They Learn* by Cynthia Tobias). Most children have strengths in one particular learning style. The most effective way to teach a group (or an individual for that matter), therefore, is to combine several learning experiences at once. Music does that.

The lyrics will have the most impact on linguistic learners. This includes the people who respond well to what they hear as well as those who are more visually oriented and benefit from seeing the words on a screen. Bodily kinesthetic learners (the movers) will learn from the actions. Interpersonal learners will respond to the interactive approach of the song-leader. The logical-mathematical mind learns from the patterns, rhythm and sequencing inherent in music. The intrapersonal or introspective learner benefits from the time that music affords for meditation and reflection. And, of course, the musical learners — those who learn best through rhythm and pitch — are best served when life is one continuing concert.

Memory

On the day that God called Moses and Joshua into the Tent of Meeting to commission Joshua as Moses' successor, God gave the aging patriarch one last assignment: teach a song to the people. The song would serve as an explanation to their descendants for their problems. Deuteronomy 31:21-22 reads: "And when many disasters and difficulties come upon them, this song will testify against them, *because it will not be forgotten* by their descendants ... So Moses wrote down this song that day and taught it to the Israelites."

God wanted his message passed on in song so it would be remembered. Songs, from "Jesus loves me" to "I'm a little teapot," stick with us. One reason for this is the repetition. We would never be able to tell the same Bible story again and again, but kids love to hear the same song over and over. Repeating the lyrics, both at one sitting and over a period of weeks and months, locks them into long-term memory.

Model

There is another good reason for singing. The Bible speaks of the stars, the mountains and all the creatures singing. God himself expresses his love and joy over his children with singing. And those who have been redeemed echo the words of Moses and the Israelites in response to God's salvation: "The Lord is my strength and my song" (Exodus 15:2).

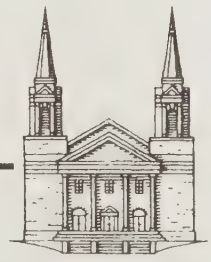
We sing because God likes to hear songs and God likes to sing songs. And if we want to keep the Eutychus in our class awake by using God's own teaching methods, this is an important one to keep in mind.

Just to help us all remember, hum the tune to "Yankee Doodle" and then sing with me:

Sing a song about the Lord —
his grace, his love, his glory.
The kids will learn and not forget
the great salvation story! R

Margaret Brouillette is a mother, a public school religious education teacher and a Sunday school director in Saint Luc, Que. Her first book, *Famous Jerks of the Bible*, is due to be released in the summer.

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A few ordinary Presbyterians

by Andrew Foster

What the Special Committee re Sexual Orientation has been doing for four years

What on earth is the General Assembly Special Committee re Sexual Orientation? After four years of work, it still seems to be the most misunderstood organization in the church.

Contrary to what we keep hearing, it isn't an alternative committee to the Committee on Church Doctrine, and it certainly isn't a coven of secretive zealots who are going to unleash terrifying new ways upon an unready church. No, we're a few ordinary Presbyterians faced with one of the least popular assignments in the church today. We meet twice a year with Rev. Wendy Paterson, the convener, and have enjoyed the hospitality of Knox College in Toronto, Crieff Hills in Puslinch, St Michael's House in Oakville and even the hallowed halls of 50 Wynford Drive in Toronto for our meetings. The members travel from Alberta and New Brunswick, and various places in between.

What do we do? The special committee has two principal mandates through overtures to various General Assemblies. These are broadly:

- to clarify the limits of the roles of homosexual people in the church
- to develop a scientific, psychological and medical, together with a pastoral, theological and biblical understanding of sexuality.

The creation of the committee was probably the result of a number of different concerns. First, of course, the increased awareness in society of homosexual people and the role they play. The question is frequently asked, "Where does the church stand?" The Presbyterian Church in Canada has had its own painful experience in Lachine, Quebec, over the attempt to ordain a minister who wished to be open with the fact that he is gay and living with another man. And the whole country had already watched the struggles within The United Church of Canada as it wrestled with the same issue. It was clearly time to look at our own position more closely.

The committee is probably a good picture of the diversity of Presbyterians from across the country. We consist of six ministers, one divinity student, two laypeople (one a sociologist and the other an engineer) and two consultants, one of whom is a gay doctor and the other being the principal clerk of the General Assembly. We were appointed by three Moderators of the General Assembly: John Congram, William Klempa and Arthur Van Seters, none of whom is noted as having wildly radical views. None of the members lobbied to be appointed to the committee — far from it! A few found they were not truly called to do this work, and their places have been taken by others who were appointed in the same way. Perhaps the process has worked well because it has provided a diverse group that may find consensus difficult and can never legitimately be accused of being a special interest group.

Members of the Special Committee re Sexual Orientation

Rev. Wendy Paterson (convener), *Windsor, Ont.*
Georgia Cordes (secretary), *Winnipeg*
Rev. Philip Lee, *Saint John, N.B.*
Rev. Alice Wilson, *Hanover, Ont.*
Amanda Currie, *Ottawa*
Rev. Kevin Livingston, *Toronto*
Rev. Dianne Ollerenshaw, *Calgary*
Rev. Stewart Gillan, *Toronto*
Andrew Foster, *Cambridge, Ont.*
Rev. Stephen Kendall (consultant), *Toronto*
Dr. Richard Isaac (consultant), *Toronto*

Our process has been to adopt a listening role. Getting started was the hardest part, and one of the first decisions was to ask for stories from the church membership. The stories are still coming in, and you may have seen some of them in our report to the General Assembly last year. They cover the whole spectrum from pain and fear that jumps off the page, to hatred and bigotry that is breath-taking, the more so when it is offered in the name of God. These stories certainly sensitized the committee and prepared the members for much of what has happened since then. A small, but important group of stories and comments has come from former members of the United Church who joined with Presbyterians after their church's policy on ordination was put into effect.

The information gathering has been fascinating, and all the committee members have participated in it. The scientific consensus on the possible causes and the description of homosexuality seem to be generally accepted. Regardless of one's doctrinal viewpoint — and there are plenty of them — there now seems to be little doubt that the only scientifically correct way to refer to sexuality is as an orientation that is a fundamental part of our make-up. For most gay people, the suggestion of choice is no longer supportable.

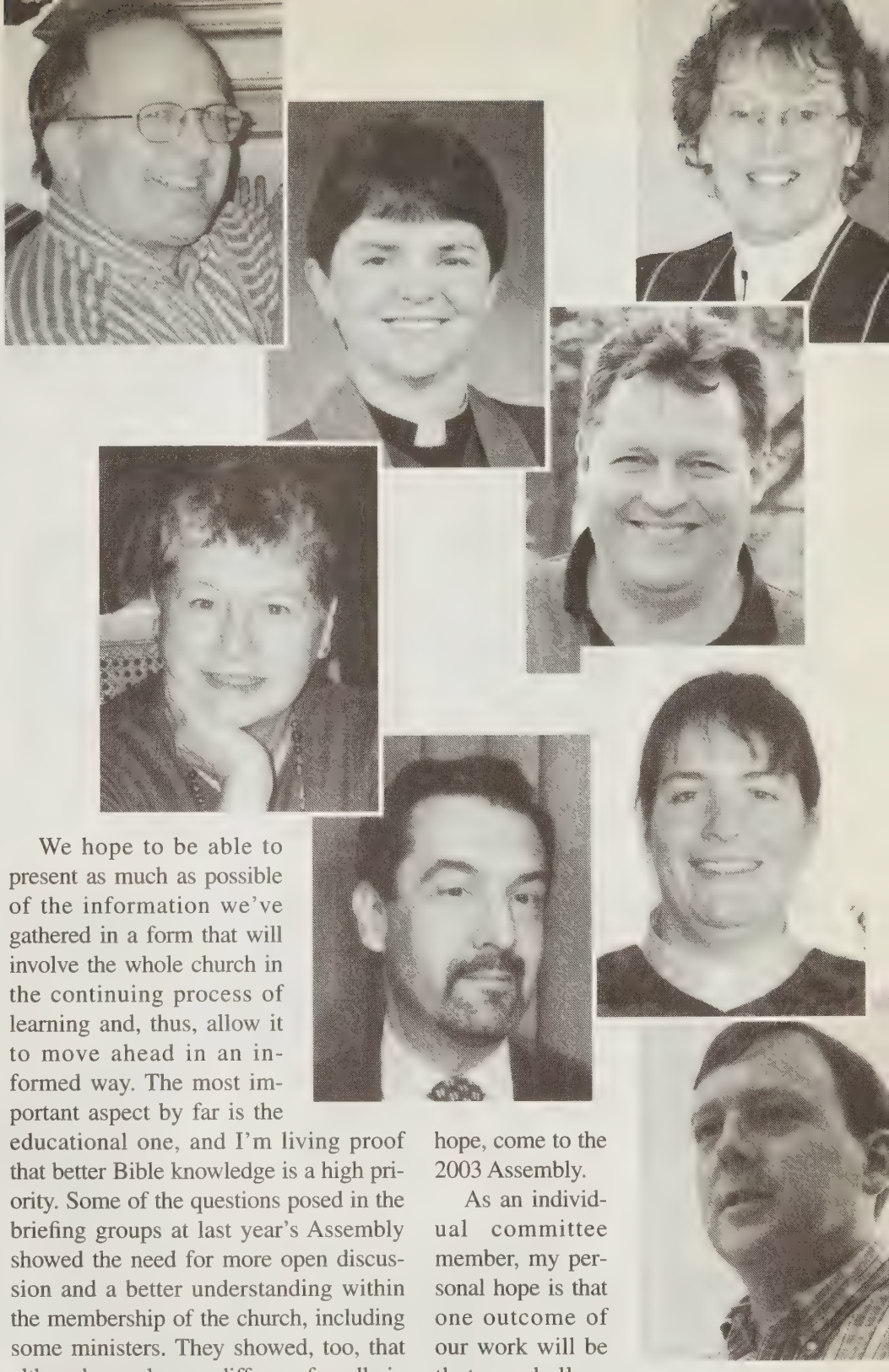
Because the scientific aspects of the study are well-documented, it is the biblical approach that continues to be the more stimulating. One of the high points of the entire study so far was a presentation at the last meeting by Patricia Dutcher-Walls, Old Testament professor at Knox College, Toronto. She discussed the "priestly theology" and the holiness code of the Old Testament in terms that were easy for the layperson to understand. This takes us to the beginning of

the doctrinal path that led the church to the 1994 Statement on Human Sexuality, itself essential reading for anyone wishing to explore our church's present position. It gave this committee member a better understanding of Leviticus and helped to shift my views onto more solid ground. At the last meeting, we also received a paper on ordination from Dr. Joseph McLelland and had a presentation by Dr. William Klempa on homosexuality and the church. At the next meeting, a New Testament scholar will speak to us. We also hope to have a joint meeting with the Committee on Church Doctrine.

One thing that has been made clear from our information gathering is that, in order to understand the nature of sexuality, we need to move away from the popular use of the phrase "life-style choice" to define a person's place in the spectrum of sexuality. "Orientation" is more accurate and a better description. The analogy I like to draw is that the big red sports car I used to drive was, without doubt, a life-style choice. My rapidly spreading bald patch is something inherent in my body and is, definitely, not my own choice, far less a life-style. Like my sexuality, my baldness is part of the package, and I was not given any choice in the matter.

The social, as well as religious, history of sexuality is important background knowledge for any serious study. In most countries, it is a long time since homosexual activity was a criminal offence to be punished by imprisonment and treated by brutal drug therapies. However, there are still organizations that claim to be able to change orientations by other methods.

The feeling at the moment among committee members seems to be that we should aim for a non-prescriptive final report: a report that will not be the final word. The reality of a committee such as this is that a consensus that would allow a prescriptive report is an unlikely goal and, in that, we simply reflect the reality of the church as a whole. Indeed, we could hardly claim to be Presbyterian if we were to say the last word has been said on any topic. The aim is that the church should show its faith in the ability of the Holy Spirit, not simply one small committee, to guide it forward as an undivided body, perhaps to a position as yet unimagined by any of us.



We hope to be able to present as much as possible of the information we've gathered in a form that will involve the whole church in the continuing process of learning and, thus, allow it to move ahead in an informed way. The most important aspect by far is the educational one, and I'm living proof that better Bible knowledge is a high priority. Some of the questions posed in the briefing groups at last year's Assembly showed the need for more open discussion and a better understanding within the membership of the church, including some ministers. They showed, too, that although people may differ profoundly in their opinions, we get ahead by standing side by side, learning together and looking forward together, not by facing off against each other and butting heads.

The present plan, therefore, is to have a study package, consisting of the material we've gathered from a wide variety of sources, prepared for distribution by the time of the 2002 General Assembly. No doubt there will be further reflection from the feedback, which should allow us to prepare a final report that will, we hope, come to the 2003 Assembly.

As an individual committee member, my personal hope is that one outcome of our work will be that we shall no longer talk of "sides" in continuing the church's discussions on sexuality. To do so is to attempt to divide the indivisible Body of Christ. The mission of all of us, regardless of our differing views, is surely to work for the unity of the church so that it may continue to be a force for good in the world. R

Andrew Foster is an elder of Central Church, Cambridge, Ont., and a member of the Special Committee re Sexual Orientation.

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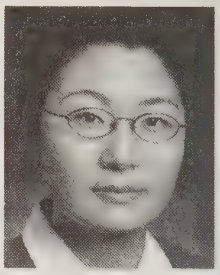
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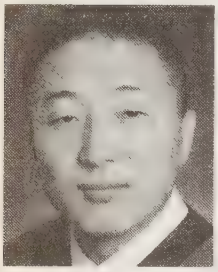
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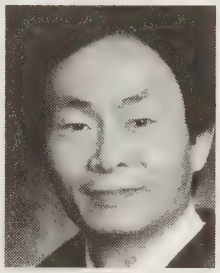
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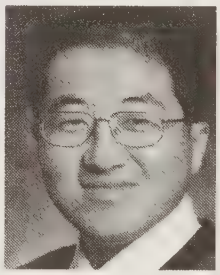
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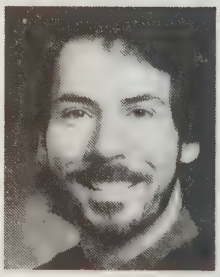
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Margaret Read,
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Home congregation:
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Woodbridge, ON

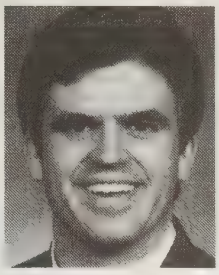
Knox College *(continued)*

Certificate of Christian Studies



Jo-Ann Dickson, BA, M.Ed.
Home congregation:
Alexandra, Brantford, ON

Master of Theology



William G. Ingram, BA, M.Div.
Home congregation:
Morningside-High Park, Toronto

Doctor of Theology



Chul Min Hur, BA, M.Div., ThM
Home congregation:
Christian Reformed Church



Douglas Fred Robinson
BA, M.Div., ThM
Home congregation:
St. Andrew's, Thorold, ON

Doctor of Philosophy (From University of St. Michael's College)



Grace Kim
Home congregation:
Presbyterian Church of Korea

Mann Park
(No photo available)
Home congregation:
North Park, Toronto

Vancouver School of Theology

Master of Divinity



Donna Marie Hagen, BA
Home congregation:
Circle West, Saskatoon



Bokgyoum Joanne Kim
Home congregation:
Brentwood, Burnaby, BC

Diploma in Christian Studies

Carol Ann Young, BA
(No photo available)
Home congregation:
Knox, Calgary

The Presbyterian College

Master of Divinity

* also received College Diploma
** also received General Assembly Certificate



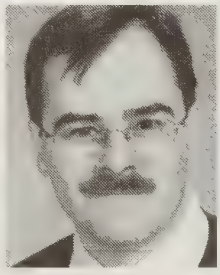
Roland De Vries,*
BA, STM
Home congregation:
Knox, Toronto



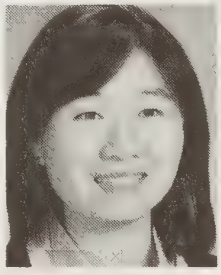
Hye-Sook Kam,*
BA, B.Th.
Home congregation:
Korean Church of Montreal



Anna Smith Lefort,**
Dip.Theol., Dip.Min.
Home congregation:
St. Andrew's, Whycocomagh, NS



Kevin MacDonald,*
BA, B.Th.
Home congregation:
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Home congregation:
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E-mail: jsc_riverside_emery@hotmail.com

you were asking?

Tony Plomp



Of treasurers and calls

question: *Can someone who is not prepared to be a member of the board of managers serve as treasurer of the congregation?*

It is my understanding the treasurer must be a member of the board of managers. According to section 167 of the Book of Forms: "The convener, secretary and treasurer are appointed by the congregation at its annual meeting from among the members of the board. If this is not done, the board appoints them at its first meeting held after the annual meeting."

The work of treasurer has become increasingly demanding over time. This has mostly to do with added government regulations concerning income tax, CPP, EI, GST, etc. Sometimes, people may be willing to do this kind of work but do not want to be bothered with all the other responsibilities that go with being a member of the board of managers.

Although such a volunteer could be employed to "keep the books," maintain the accounts and do the routine work associated with the work of the treasurer, the board must appoint someone to be the accountable treasurer for the congregation. Such a treasurer would be responsible for supervising everything the bookkeeper or accountant does, with this individual reporting to the board through the treasurer. In my view, it is not the most "elegant" of solutions on the face of it, although I suppose it is legal.

I suspect treasurers are increasingly difficult to come by in this day and age. For some who volunteer for this work, the task looks daunting. That is why the move by some presbyteries to schedule regular workshops for congregational treasurers is one to be applauded.

question: *Does a vacancy committee have the right to call a person to our church if he or she has not sent in an application to apply for the call? Somehow I feel it is unfair to the other applicants who have taken the time to write.*

A vacancy committee is perfectly within its rights not only to receive applications from prospective candidates for the pulpit, but also to go out on a "search" (after all, it's often called a "search committee"!) to contact those whom the committee believes might be suitable candidates and to place their names on the list to be interviewed. I believe all candidates who have made an application should be treated with respect and their applications thoroughly reviewed. If the search committee decides not to proceed any further with any of them, they should be informed of that fact in writing, a common courtesy that, I gather, is frequently not extended to them by some interim moderators.

Ultimately, it is not the vacancy or search committee that calls the new minister. The committee and session may recommend the name, but the congregation decides at a legally called and constituted meeting. Members are then invited to sign the Call document, with adherents given the right to sign their concurrence. R

Please send questions for Rev. Tony Plomp to tony_plomp@telus.net or 4020 Lancelot Dr., Richmond, B.C. V7C 4S3.

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Please take a few minutes to complete the following survey and send it to: Presbyterian Record Survey, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7. Or, if you prefer, fill it out on our Web site: www.presbyterian.ca/record. For completing this survey, we will send you a copy of our book *Who is Jesus? A Reformed View*. Please be sure to include your name and full address.

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6. What is your total household income? $0-20,000 / $20,001-40,000 / $40,001-80,000 / $80,001-100,000 / $100,001 + /.
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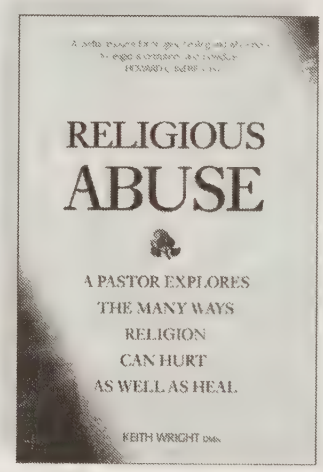
A regular C. S. Lewis of birds

A pert brown bird is tapping on our sliding door, trying to get in. A towhee, our neighbour says — another has been trying to enter her house too. This has gone on all week. The rapping begins just at dawn and flutters far into dusk, and since this is solstice, and days are long, it sometimes wakes us up before we are ready. Poe had it easy: a one-night stand with a raven who nevermore chose to return. To look at our towhee, you wouldn't think it was that stupid. In fact this one strikes you as portly and intelligent, a regular C. S. Lewis of birds. But the patio stutter does not flag: the towhee rattles along, mindless as a woodpecker. Sometimes I chase it off, or tie the dog up by the door, but it always comes back. If I had a gun, would I shoot it? Do I have the patience of the Dalai Lama? Our neighbour says they see their reflection in the window, are doing their best to meet themselves, a failed encounter of I and thou. I think it is envy: the towhees really do want in, they want to forsake the friendly skies, give up on the fabled outdoor life. It's overrated, they have decided. The newspaper this morning says that fossils of feathered dinosaurs have just been discovered in China. Reptile gives way to bird, and now bird to housecat — or even to human, *homo domicilium*. Evolution twitters on, seeing itself through a glass, darkly.

— Paul Willis

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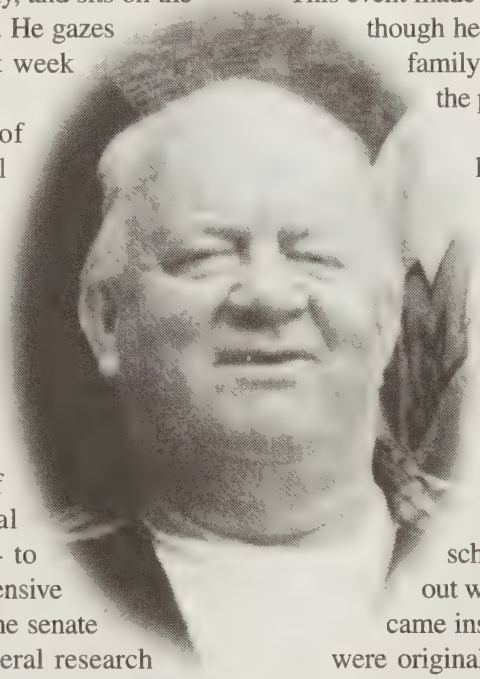
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Virginia Bell

Rea Brown: surgeon and churchman

A story of family, faith and service to others

To be in the presence of Dr. Rea Brown is to be in the presence of greatness. However, most members of Briarwood Church in Beaconsfield, Quebec, have no idea the big teddy bear of a man with the strong, chubby hands of a son of the farm is one of the top trauma surgeons in North America. Briarwood people see a quiet man with a pleasant smile who comes to church with wife, Kathy, and sits on the right side, in the second row from the back. He gazes up high, contemplating events of the past week and talking them over with God.



Rea retired last year after 38 years of medical practice at the Montreal General Hospital. "How lucky I was to be at the Montreal General," he says. "It is a world leader in so many fields. There were so many talented people. They have done a lot for the province and for the country. They were never afraid to record and compare with the rest of the world."

Rea was a professor of surgery at McGill University since 1984 and head of the trauma unit at the Montreal General (a McGill teaching hospital). From 1984 to 1991, he was a director of the surgical intensive care and trauma unit there. He served on the senate at McGill, and wrote and supervised several research papers. He won many international prizes, one for his work on colon cancer. He has had a longtime interest in pancreatitis and diabetes, and one of his students in now a world authority on diseases of the pancreas and diabetes.

Rea received his higher education at McGill University and at the Montreal General, training as a general surgeon. "That means I operated on everything from the top of the nose to the tips of the toes!" explained Rea. "When the Second World War ended, Canada was a great place to learn, and McGill was one of the best." It was up to the general surgeon to direct the care of the trauma patient — any person who has come into collision with his environment such as breaking a leg in a fall.

The worst trauma situation for Rea was the 1989 massacre at École Polytechnique in Montreal. Rea was giving a lecture and not on duty that night. He had just finished when he heard the special code come in over the hospital loudspeaker. So he rolled up his sleeves and pitched in.

Never in his life had he seen anything like it. Thanks to the skills of Rea and his trauma team, all the young women who came to the Montreal General that dreadful night survived. He received the American College Trauma Award for that work. This event made Rea a staunch advocate of gun control even though he came from the farm where everyone in the family was a hunter. "It's not the hunters who are the problem; it's the gun in the wrong hands."

God has walked with Rea throughout his life. At times, like the massacre, or when a good man or woman is dying and Rea has prayed for recovery, he has had a hard time coming to grips with their deaths. The only question that has never been answered for him is "Why?" Rea has pondered this question with many of his Presbyterian pastors over the years but has never come up with a satisfactory answer. "I guess there is no answer," he says.

Rea has been a Presbyterian since high school days when his mother had some falling out with another church and the whole family became instant Presbyterians. Both sides of his family were originally from the Holiness Movement (now the Free Methodist). His Uncle John and Uncle Stewart on his mother's side were ministers in the area of the family farm — Cardinal, Ontario, a small town of 2,000 on the St. Lawrence River about half-way between Cornwall and Brockville, and home of Canada Starch. Rea's parents were married in the Holiness Movement but later became United Church members.

That Rea became formally educated was something of a miracle. He hated school and studying, and only passed from one grade to another conditionally. His dad, who ran a successful dairy farm operation, did not have much schooling but was determined his three children should have a college education. He switched Rea to a one-room school where a marvellous teacher, Mrs. Van Camp, showed him the value of books. His whole life changed, although he still wasn't crazy about studying.

When Rea studied at McGill, he was a star football player for

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the McGill Redmen. Many of the players prayed regularly before the games, but not publicly as some teams do now. The Redmen won the Canadian intercollegiate football championship in 1960, and all the players were inducted into the McGill Athletic Hall of Fame last fall. "By golly, I still hated studying," says Rea. "But I knew if I didn't keep up with my marks I couldn't play football."

Rea eventually became the consulting general surgeon for the McGill Redmen and the Montreal Alouettes. He also cared for the Montreal Canadiens. He has several interesting anecdotes involving the Canadiens. As a kid in Cardinal, Rea would tune in for the games from Montreal; but, there was so much interference from the nearby radio stations in Ottawa, he could only hear the games beginning with the second period. He persevered, however. And, then, church and sports combined for the thrill of a lifetime.

When the young people's group from St. Andrew's Church in Cardinal went to Montreal for a PYPS event, the youth asked the minister's wife (Maude Fitzsimons) if they could go to the Montreal Forum on Saturday night to see Rocket Richard try for his "big goal." She agreed, and they obtained tickets in the nosebleed section through Canada Starch. The kids had a wonderful PYPS weekend, but the icing on the cake was watching the Rocket score his big goal.

When Rea became a surgeon at the Montreal General, one of the doctors had season's tickets to the Canadiens right behind the glass in the old Forum. He wanted to sell them, and Rea was anxious to own at least a share in them. He and Kathy, setting up house in Montreal, had only a few sticks of furniture and no budget for extravagances. However, the furniture was put on hold and they were behind the glass for many games! They still are!

So, how did the farm boy get into medicine? The fault, or credit, lies with Rea's older brother George. In 1942, George became ill with pneumonia. At that time, it was a sentence of death. There were no antibiotics. Complications set in. He was treated in Brockville to no avail. Toronto hospitals could not help him and, finally, the Montreal General agreed to take him. He had several operations there. He received wonderful care and, then, with the war ended, penicillin became available for the general public. George's recovery was almost instantaneous, nothing short of a miracle. The Brown family never forgot the care and the kindness of the Montreal General, and Rea ultimately went into medicine there.

Would Rea go into surgery today? "I certainly would, but you'd have to love surgery to stick with it. It is tough to have a decent income here in Quebec. There is no operating room time. Young surgeons starting today are in a tight squeeze financially."

Now in retirement, Rea is a consultant regarding Groin Syndrome for the NHL Players' Association. Hockey fans will remember when Claude Lemieux was hurt in the playoffs 10 years ago and was out for the rest of the season. Throughout the summer, he couldn't even play golf! When fall came, the management wondered if he might be faking his injury. Rea's chief at the Montreal General, Dr. David Mulder, thought something was wrong with Lemieux and asked Rea to operate. He did, and he found a tear in the fascia of the abdominal wall that he repaired. Lemieux recovered and went on to win two Stanley Cups. From then on, hockey players with Groin Syndrome (some 30 in 10 years) have been referred to Doctors Mulder and Brown for successful repair. In the fall of this year, they will present a paper at a conference in Phoenix, Arizona. What is the cause of this syndrome? "The ice is not good enough," says Brown. "Out West, they have good ice; but not here, and not in Toronto either!"

Rea sometimes goes down to the family farm. He goes fishing and looks around in wonder at God's magnificent creation. He enjoys his children — Beth, Kelly, Laurie and Drew — and their families. And, week by week, Rea and Kathy continue to slip quietly into Briarwood Church and let God's peace wash over them. R

Virginia Bell is clerk of session at Briarwood Church in Beaconsfield, Que.

Roundtable discussion looks at the church as global citizen

On March 30 and 31, Presbyterians met in Valleyview Church, Calgary, to discuss "The Church's Role as Global Citizen." The consultation was part of a series entitled "Building Global Community: Challenges for the Church in the Third Millennium," a project sponsored by the International Affairs Committee of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. A local working group with members from five Calgary congregations organized the event, with five goals in mind: to educate participants on the international ministry of the denomination, to identify some of the global issues in which the church should be involved, to encourage young adults to take part in such events, to support those already working in the area of justice, and to inspire those who long to put their faith into action. Three worship services were integrated into the agenda.



Pauline Brown and Ken Kim.

Theme speakers for the roundtable were Pauline Brown and Ken Kim. Pauline Brown has worked as a nurse and missionary in India since 1951. This month, her years of outstanding service will be recognized when she is presented with the Order of Canada. Pauline reminded the roundtable participants that God's people have always been called to be citizens of the world. Individually and collectively as the church, it is our responsibility to love our neighbours as ourselves, she said.

Ken Kim, who works with the Commission for Verification of Corporate Codes of Conduct (COVERCO) in Guatemala, addressed the issue of "policing globalization." He outlined the changes that have taken place as a result of globalization, particularly the enormous concentration of capital in the hands of transnational corporations. These corporations commonly dictate the conditions for investment and the nature of the work-place, and producing goods cheaply is usually the bottom line. In an effort to eliminate "sweat shop factories," COVERCO negotiates with companies such as The Gap and Liz Claiborne to allow them to monitor working conditions and to provide weekly reports. Although brand-name companies initially want little to do with such an evaluation process, many have come to realize they have more to lose by not participating.

Both speakers brought to light the question: "Are we our brother and sister's keeper?" On Saturday morning, participants could ask that question of themselves through a choice of four workshops: Fair Trade; Health Issues, particularly the HIV/AIDS pandemic; Human Rights, and how to energize people into action; and Aboriginal Issues, specifically land claims in Canada.

Saturday afternoon, after a brief address by Marjorie Ross, associate secretary of International Ministries, on the recent restructuring of ecumenical coalitions [see March *Record*, page 33], participants made recommendations for the International Affairs Committee. These included: suggestions for future study and work, supporting organizations such as COVERCO in Third World countries, providing information to assist Presbyterians in investing in responsible companies, and looking at how The Presbyterian Church in Canada promotes corporate responsibility through its own investments. (*From a report by Dianne Ollerenshaw*)

Presbyterian Church maintains 25-year tradition of blessing the nets

On February 4, fishers and their families joined with the congregation of St. John's Church, Port Stanley, Ontario, for the Blessing of the Nets service. It is a tradition begun by St. John's in this Lake Erie fishing community in 1954 and has carried on almost annually ever since.

Guest speaker Rev. Leo Hughes, a retired minister from Arnprior, Ontario, joined with Rev. James Redpath, minister of St. John's, in conducting the service. Hughes reminded the gathering that Christ isn't found only at church — he's found everywhere, including along the shores of Lake Erie. "He is interested in the nets. He is interested in your way of life. He is interested in your boats and your families."



Photo: St. Thomas Times-Journal

Parishioners and fishers from Port Stanley gather at St. John's Church, Port Stanley, Ont., for the Blessing of the Nets service.

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Congregation's outreach reaches far

About two years ago, Knox Church, Goderich, Ontario, decided to start a hands-on outreach/missions project. The congregation made connections with a poor barrio in Managua, Nicaragua, where a local pastor had hopes of building a school. Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in the world. Half of its population are school-age children, half of whom do not attend school. With assistance from the Congregational Initiatives Program of Presbyterian World Service and Development, Knox financed the building of three classrooms in the barrio, where more than 200 children now attend classes daily — in shifts.



Two cultures meet: Youth from Knox Church, Goderich, Ont., visit with children at their school in Nicaragua.

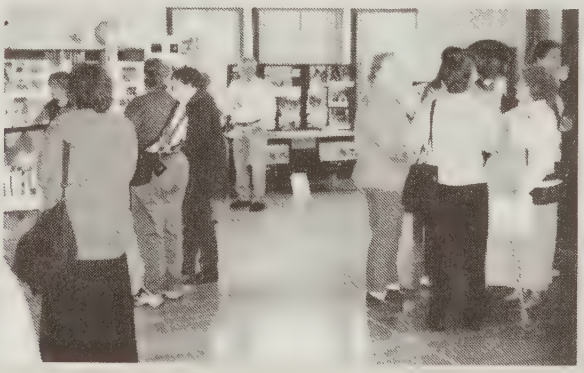
During the March break this year, a delegation of eight adults and eight youth from the congregation spent 10 days in Managua, getting to know the people and sharing a common faith with them. Some of the time was spent playing with the children and holding primary care medical clinics (two members of the delegation were doctors). Three additional classrooms are scheduled for completion before the rainy season. The Goderich group also spent time laying the concrete floor for two new classrooms in a remote mountain village.

Spring fair a success

Winter storms in April are not unheard of in the Atlantic Provinces, which may explain why approximately 170 hardy souls braved inclement conditions to attend the Christian Education Fair held at First Church, New Glasgow, N.S.

Videos, balloons, clowns, a children's festival, and displays of synod events and programs were all part of the fair. The featured speaker was Mark DeVries, a Presbyterian youth director from Tennessee and author of the popular youth ministry manual *Family-Based Youth Ministries*. Music was provided by the worship band, (temporarily known as) The Merry MacLeods.

And what fair is complete without cows and hogs? Or, in this case, COWS and HOGS — part of a covenant by participants to be members of the **C**louds **o**f **W**itnesses and to build **H**abits **o**f **G**reatness in children and youth. Youth are to be included, not isolated, in congregations. To that end, participants pledged to pray for at least one child, from baptism to university, and to get to know that youth and his or her interests.



Like most fairs, the Christian Education Fair at First Church, New Glasgow, N.S., was a place to meet friends.

We were just being modest

In the May issue (News), the *Record* announced it had received an Award of Merit from the 2000 Associated Church Press (ACP) for its January 2000 cover. The *Record* has since learned it received two other ACP Awards of Merit: one for Jim Taylor's column, An Everyday God, which the judges called "great writing and high inspiration," and one for the cartoon by Gruber and Denton on page 6 of the March 2000 issue, which judges called a great example of a humorous cartoon that works on both the graphic and the content levels.

The Associated Church Press is an 85-year-old professional association of 175 religious publications representing a combined circulation of over 28 million.

news scan

Patients' right to life must take priority over pharmaceutical profits

Christian officials throughout the world have hailed the decision of 39 pharmaceutical companies to drop their lawsuit against South Africa, permitting the Pretoria government to buy anti-AIDS medicine at generic-drug prices. Malcolm Damon, policy spokesperson with the South African Council of Churches, called the decision "a major victory, not just for South Africans but for the developing world," adding that 5,000 of his countrymen and women were dying every week from AIDS-related illnesses. But optimism has been tempered by continued uncertainty over whether the drugs will soon be available to the estimated 4.7 million South Africans (one in nine people) infected with HIV. (*ENI*)

Can you spare any vouchers for a meal?

A church centre in Glasgow, Scotland's largest city, is offering a solution to the age-old dilemma of whether to give beggars cash or the cold shoulder. Vouchers to give to beggars, costing one pound sterling ($1.45 US), are on sale at Glasgow's Lodging House Mission. Each voucher may be exchanged for a full, cooked breakfast or a three-course lunch at the mission, run by the Church of Scotland's Glasgow presbytery. (*ENI*)

Leon Sullivan, a "prophet" in the fight against apartheid

Church officials and leading defenders of human rights have praised Leon Sullivan, a leading figure in U.S. efforts to end South Africa's system of apartheid, for his long commitment to making corporations more responsible for ethical conduct. Sullivan, an African American and ordained Baptist minister, died on April 25 of leukaemia in Scottsdale, Arizona. He was 78. Sullivan was best known for creating the Sullivan Principles, a set of ethical guidelines later signed by officials from more than 125 U.S. corporations working in South Africa. The principles pledged the corporations to practise racial non-discrimination in their South African operations and to oppose apartheid. (*ENI*)

Remember the Singing Nun?

Monks from the Saints Augustine and Serafim Sarof Monastery in Greece have detoured from their usual Byzantine hymns, following up a best-selling rock music CD with the release of a second. Titled *SOS*, the CD includes the lyrics: "I'm a little microchip so small/ that will lead you to slavery/ take whatever you want in this world/ provided you live without God." The Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church has condemned their musical aspirations as "scandalous." (*The Church Herald*)

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Decoded message from page 50:

AND GOD SAID,"I HAVE PLACED MY RAINBOW IN THE CLOUDS. IT IS THE SIGN OF MY PERMANENT PROMISE TO YOU AND TO ALL THE EARTH."

Hungarian male choir to tour Ontario

The male choir of the Hungarian Reformed Seminary in Romania travels across Ontario during August and September for an extensive 25-day concert tour. The 25-member seminary choir will participate in Sunday worship services and perform evening concerts.

These young men minister through performance, testimonies and sermons. Their musical repertoire, sung mainly in English, includes traditional gospel songs and spiritual arrangements. The evening concerts feature classical and operatic selections with works by Handel, Verdi, Gounod and others.

The choir is directed by Brian Johnston, a Canadian Presbyterian mission staffperson in Romania. An accomplished music and English teacher, Johnston began his work in Cluj, Romania, at the theological seminary of the Hungarian Reformed Church in 1993. He established the English-language choir from seminary students, and they have travelled extensively throughout Romania.

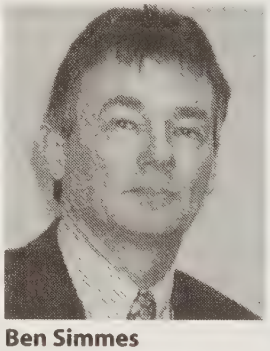
Pre-war Hungary was home to the largest Reformed church in Europe with over three million members. Since the decline of communism in the late 1980s, the Hungarian Reformed Church has renewed its focus on Christian education. The Presbyterian Church in Canada has become increasingly involved in mission work in Eastern Europe. Johnston is one of two mission staffpersons working in Eastern Europe.

The choir's Ontario itinerary includes the Kitchener-Waterloo, London, Windsor, Toronto, Lindsay, Collingwood and Ottawa areas around the end of August and early September. Concert events are free of charge but all offerings will go to pre-selected projects in Romania.

For more information, contact: Barbara Nawratil, mission interpretation co-ordinator, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1-800-619-2307, ext. 259; bnawratil@presbyterian.ca.

Oikocredit puts unused money to good use

"When an economy is shaky, it's the people on the bottom who get hurt." With that thought, Ben Simmes, manager of member relations and fund officer for Oikocredit International, summed up his organization's purpose. Oikocredit (previously the Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society) is an international development bank run by Christians. It receives investment capital from all over the world and uses it to provide loans at a manageable interest rate to economically disadvantaged people. This allows them to establish co-operative, self-development enterprises.



Ben Simmes

Simmes was in Canada recently from Oikocredit's headquarters in Amersfoot, the Netherlands. A personable, unassuming man, he is an articulate and convincing spokesperson. At a small reception at the national Presbyterian Church offices on April 19, he talked energetically about the organization's work.

Established in 1975, Oikocredit exists, in part, to stimulate debate on what people can do with their money. It challenges churches, organizations and individuals to examine their investment priorities and to allocate some of their money to the poor and powerless so that they might become self-sufficient. Investors will not get rich from their involvement (the interest earned varies from zero to two per cent). But, as Simmes points out, the people who support Oikocredit are not "captains of industry." For the most part, they are ordinary Christians who are willing to forgo interest on their investments in order to provide credit to those who have no other access to it. The Presbyterian Church in Canada was the first church world-wide to divest five per cent of its portfolio to Oikocredit. As well, the Women's Missionary Society has $75,000 currently invested in the organization's efforts.

According to Simmes, 85 per cent of loans granted by Oikocredit are repaid. He admits that some people suggest that rather remarkable percentage could be even higher. Perhaps it could be, he says; but, if it were, would they truly be living up to their purpose — providing credit to the projects most in need. Simmes also believes that, in Oikocredit's case at least, lending money is better than giving it away. Repaying a loan helps people build up their self-esteem, he says. It also "levels the playing field" and creates a mutual dependence: the people assisted depend on Oikocredit for the money for their project while Oikocredit depends on the viability of the project for its own success.

Simmes points out that collateral is as important to his organization as it is to banks and other lending institutions. But Oikocredit has a different way of looking at it. For example, someone involved in a project might put the house up as collateral. The house will often be worth little on the market, but it is invaluable as a sign of commitment to the project.

Oikocredit was originally begun with churches in mind. However, over the years, many groups and individuals have become involved and, now, 35 per cent of Oikocredit's current $130 million in share income comes from such sources. This gives the organization a much wider base, Simmes says. And it is a wide base that makes Oikocredit work. Wherever there are projects in need of financing, there are local people to make the connections. (*Tom Dickey*)

Readers wishing to make a connection with Oikocredit can contact First Oikocredit Canada, 183 Chedoke Ave., Hamilton, Ont. L8P 4P2; Tel. (905) 528-2730; E-mail: canada.sa@oikocredit.org.; Web site: www.oikocredit.org/ca.

Heather Jones

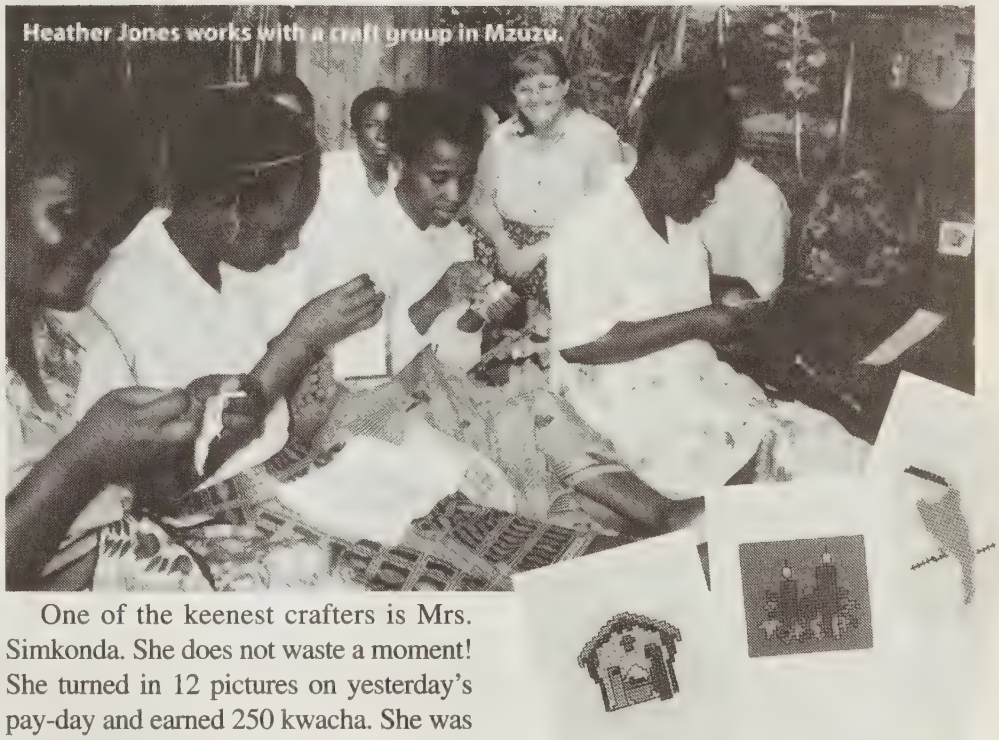
Cross-stitching in Malawi

A sewing project generates new hope and dignity for women in Mzuzu

As a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada serving with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Mzuzu, Malawi, I have several projects, one of which is to gather local women together and teach them how to cross-stitch. By making souvenirs for tourists and visitors, the St. Andrew's Cross-Stitchers can supplement their meagre family incomes.

Out of that work has grown another project that promises to be bigger and have an even greater impact on more lives. We're still stitching; but this group, instead of working on items to sell here in Malawi, is aiming for a select export market. The impetus for this work has come out of a joint project between the women's guild of the church here and seed money from the Presbytery of Northern New York. We are hoping our greeting cards will find many markets among church partners.

The women are cross-stitching eight designs: four are Christmas pictures and four are for all-occasion cards. The pictures are displayed in a window cut into heavy paper, which is then folded into a card. If we are able to sell these for the equivalent of $4 Cdn, the woman will receive 50 cents for each picture she makes. Even that small amount has made a huge difference in the women's lives. The rest of the proceeds will cover the cost of supplies (though church groups have donated many of the sewing supplies), production, administration and shipping. We hope there will be enough money left to support the work of the women's guild and to start up other income-generating projects.



Heather Jones works with a craft group in Mzuzu.

One of the keenest crafters is Mrs. Simkonda. She does not waste a moment! She turned in 12 pictures on yesterday's pay-day and earned 250 kwacha. She was so pleased, but had an almost unbelieving expression on her face. I wondered what experiences contributed to this reaction.

When the chaos of our weekly session was over, I asked her if she would share some of her story with me so I could help people in Canada understand what life is like in Malawi. She was more than willing.

Mrs. Simkonda's husband was an accounting clerk in a large quasi-government service organization. They lived adequately on his salary, in a rented house near Nkhata Bay where he was assigned to work. Trying to prepare for retirement, they had purchased a small plot of land in Mzuzu on which they hoped to build a house. But life and all their plans were derailed in 1998 when Mr. Simkonda contracted meningitis and died.

Since then, Mrs. Simkonda has been unable to settle. She tried to go to her home area, but her parents are both dead, and other relatives were unable to provide much support. Eventually, Mrs. Simkonda decided she needed to try to make a life for herself and for her children. She used the small death gratuity when it was finally processed to purchase bricks and iron sheets with which she built a house on their plot in Mzuzu. It has three rooms and a dirt floor. It does not have running water or electricity, but it is shelter from the cold and wet — and it is hers.

Her oldest son, 19, now stays with his uncle (known as his "younger father" in this culture) and is in his second year of secondary school. During school vacation last August, he was able to come north to visit his mother. Since then, neither Mrs. Simkonda nor the uncle has been able to find money to travel for another visit.

Before getting involved with the women's guild sewing project, Mrs. Simkonda was trying to survive by buying and selling ground nuts (peanuts, for Canadians). She was able to earn five to 10 kwacha per day. Life was difficult; she and the two children remaining at home suffered a lot. They would eat whatever she could buy, or what neighbours and friends might find to share with her. The children, now 12 and seven, are not in school. The older one was sick too frequently to attend regularly, so the teacher suggested it was pointless for him to try. Since the youngest one has been old enough to attend school, life has not been settled enough for her even to try.

When I asked about the expression of disbelief I had noticed, Mrs. Simkonda said it is hard for her to believe she can earn money on a regular basis. Her income has gone from about 50 kwacha a week to more than 200. Even though we have now celebrated pay-day four times, it is still difficult for her to believe this is real.

For a month now, she and her children have been eating regularly. They have had fish and tea, and even sugar for the tea. She has been able to buy soap. For the first time in three years, she and her children have eaten meat. If this work continues, Mrs. Simkonda hopes they will all come to feel more settled. Perhaps the children will be able to go to school.

This story is not unique. Mrs. Simkonda's story is true, and I feel privileged to share it with you. But while we can relate to the individual, personal story, it is also important to remember the larger perspective. There are many similar projects in many communities, operated independently like ours or supported through various non-profit agencies such as Ten Thousand Villages (Mennonite Self-Help stores), Oxfam, Serve and others. We in the West (the rich world) make choices every time we shop. By finding out about "fair trade" shops and catalogues, and by choosing to use them, we support millions of people like Mrs. Simkonda who want to be able to support themselves and their families.

The impact of a regular wage for a struggling family can be the difference between hope and despair. Sometimes, it is even the difference between life and death. As this work becomes established here in the Synod of Livingstonia, as markets are developed and administrative support is put into place, we hope more women will be able to join us in our small attempt to change people's lives. I hope all who support me in my work here in Malawi find hope and encouragement in this story. May we all continue to work together to support the efforts of Mrs. Simkonda and her colleagues. R

The greeting cards referred to in this article may be purchased through The Book Room, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, Ont. M3C 1J7 (1-800-619-7301).

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Arthur Van Seters

The blood of Sudan cries out to Canadians

The witness of an ecumenical delegation

Under the shade of a giant tree in Wuncuei, a mere 50 miles from the notorious Sudan oil fields, a fleeing Nuer tribal group gathers with townspeople and our Canadian ecumenical delegation. About 30 survivors share the horrendous accounts of the attack by government forces and government-armed rebel militia in the area of Leer. They happen to be living on land that the Khartoum regime wants to clear for its vast oil explorations.

Such villages are simple collections of straw thatch-roofed mud tukuls, utterly fragile and defenseless. They are a subsistence living people whose way of life is rendered insecure and unstable as a result of war and they are vulnerable to starvation. Suddenly, they are attacked by troops in government lorries shooting automatic rifles, plus armoured tanks, the dropping of shrapnel bombs and helicopter gunships. People are shot on sight: men, women, children and old people — all of them indiscriminately. Some are burned alive in their tukuls. Their cattle, the core of their subsistence economy, are, of course, confiscated.

So the villagers run in terror, leaving their dead and wounded family members behind in horror. Hundreds of them make their way under the hot Sudan sun and through dangerous Sudan nights, across forest and swampland. By a river, they eat water lilies and nuts from nearby trees. Some 600 stay there; the rest, including four chiefs, move to this village of the Dinka people. Traditional rivalries between these cattle-rearing peoples are forgotten, and the Dinka families, themselves affected by the war, share what little food they have with their Nuer brothers and sisters. The four tribal chiefs recount what happened, and each one names those he saw die. As they do so, they take a piece of twig or a nut and lay it neatly on the ground, spelling out the names so we can write them down. This is a moment of holy remembrance, and we are witnesses to their grief and to this policy of scorched-earth inhumanity.



Sudanese survivors describe attacks by government forces.

The following day, we are in Makuac where we encounter another group of 25 Nuer people, mostly women. They left the area south of Bentiu eight days before, crossing a swamp. They are even more traumatized than the first group. Their reports of death and destruction are the same. One woman says her husband and their four children were burned alive in their hut. Another says two of her children were shot and two were burned to death.

We seven Canadians are there at the invitation of the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) and through the coordinating work of Gary Kenny of the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa. Five of us represent the Anglican, Presbyterian,

Roman Catholic and United churches and the Canadian Council of Churches. A Canadian reporter based in Harare is also with us, as well as representatives of the NSCC. After we were refused visas by the Khartoum government, we enter southern Sudan with visas granted to us by the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association, the development wing of the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (my first visa of this sort!).

When we get here, we discover, to our great discomfort, that to be Canadian automatically associates us with Talisman Energy. One of the local leaders told us: "My people are being crushed by your kinsmen" (referring, obviously, to Talisman). For almost half a century, Sudan has been churning in civil war with catastrophic results. In the past 18 years, two million people have died, four and a half million are internally displaced and another 350,000 to 500,000 have fled to refugee camps like the one we visited earlier in Kakuma, Kenya.

The development of oil is providing the military dictatorship of General Omar al-Bashir with blood revenue to construct a factory near Khartoum that makes tanks and military vehicles and, probably, ammunition. Attacks on ordinary villagers in the south (where most of the oil is located) are escalating. The Government of Sudan, emboldened by oil revenues, believes it can now win the war militarily. Our delegation, therefore, calls for a moratorium on all oil development until a viable peace settlement has been concluded.

"Stop the oil, start the peace"

We, the Canadian Ecumenical Mission to Sudan, call for the following steps to be taken urgently by Canada and the international community:

- Declare a moratorium on all aspects of oil development in Sudan (including Talisman's operations). The moratorium should include exploration, infrastructure-building, drilling, extraction and sale of oil until a just peace has been negotiated, beginning with a verifiable cessation of hostilities.
- Extend additional support to IGAD [Inter-Governmental Authority on Development]. This difficult process needs time, resources and the best technical expertise from all relevant countries.
- Immediately act to develop or strengthen legislation to prevent corporations from exploiting situations of conflict for financial gain.
- Canada and other governments should, more frequently and publicly, condemn human rights violations by all parties in the conflict. Current human rights abuses include the enforced displacement of peoples, abduction, enslavement and terrorism, particularly against women and children, and the denial of religious liberty.
- Increase pressure to end the use of starvation as a weapon of war and guarantee the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to all war-affected peoples in northern and southern Sudan.
- We call on the churches and other NGOs [Non-Governmental Organizations] to mobilize additional educational, health and developmental resources to be made available to communities throughout Sudan through the organizations that are already on the ground, especially indigenous organizations such as the Sudan and New Sudan Councils of Churches.

At the beginning of this Holy Week, we call the churches to urgent prayer for the healing of this bleeding wound in the body of humanity. We plead with all our fellow Canadians to engage this painful reality and open many doors to hope and peace for the people of Sudan.

Members of the mission are: Ms. A. J. Finlay, Anglican Church of Canada, Toronto; Very Rev. William Phipps, immediate past Moderator, The United Church of Canada, Calgary; Ms. Janet Somerville, general secretary, Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), Toronto; Most Rev. Donald Theriault, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Ottawa; and Rev. Arthur Van Seters, past Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Toronto.

(from the Statement by the Canadian Ecumenical Mission to Sudan — April 10, 2001)

I now look at the current debate in Canada over whether or not Talisman Energy should remain in Sudan through the experience of the Nuer people who spoke of their suffering. How can anyone think that paying royalties to a dictatorship that acts in the ways I have described is an acceptable kind of investment? But I also believe Canada's role as a peace-making country is thoroughly discredited as long as we tolerate participation in this kind of militarized commerce. Indeed, is Canada itself not flirting with complicity in massive human rights violations? I am not persuaded by those who say Talisman's presence gives Canada a voice in Khartoum. If that is so, why is it so little heeded? Should we not be investing our resources in the establishment of peace through linkages with African countries as well as a number of European states? We have been invited into this role already, but it is both woefully underfunded and given insufficient political attention.

These events happen in the week before Holy Week. We are on a *via dolorosa*, a way of suffering, in the name of Jesus Christ. On Palm Sunday, as we return to Nairobi for our flight back to Amsterdam, I read Luke's account of Jesus entering Jerusalem. I am struck by his sadness and his anger. He wept over Jerusalem. I feel his wailing still — for the Nuer mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters of Sudan. Reading of Jesus' furious reaction to a commercialized temple, I wonder about his anger now with a blood-stained industry which our society dismisses so benignly and which the church today has been so timid to denounce. Palm Sunday opened a route that moved unrelentingly to Golgotha. That was the only way to get to the hope of Easter, a hope that must encompass a land called Sudan. Our brothers and sisters in the churches of Sudan invited us to witness their struggle and to share their journey. We must respond by our prayers and by our actions. R

Arthur Van Seters is a former Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and former principal of Vancouver School of Theology and Knox College, Toronto.

Katrina Edgerton-McGhan



Embracing the darkness

Lessons learned from a Mexican mission trip

For the past two summers, I have been a leader on a mission trip to Clinica La Esperanza near San Quintin, Mexico. This mission is operated by Mexican Medical Ministries. It works with the community to provide medical services and outreach projects and also ministers to the nearby migrant worker camps. Many short-term mission teams from all over North America work with missionaries in San Quintin. The youth who have been a part of the two summer trips have taught me by their insights into how God spoke to them. The following is an excerpt from a message a member of our team, Katrina Edgerton-McGhan, shared with our congregation. *(Mary Ingram, youth leader at St. Andrew's Church, Duncan, B.C.)*

In Philippians 4:11-13, Paul writes: "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

Using everyday tools, God has revealed himself to me in extraordinary ways. One of these tools is something that now fills me with a sense of awe. Perhaps I can inspire you to take a second look at the object in question: a toilet brush!

There were 86 people on the compound. There were three bathrooms, two for women and one for men. The men had two toilets and a urinal, and the women had three toilets. In rural Mexico, the plumbing is poor and so flushing toilet paper is a big no-no. There were six showers for 86 people and almost no hot water. These facts are important because you have to imagine the state of three bathrooms used by 86 people who are dirty, sweaty and on the verge of abandoning all care for personal hygiene. The floors were covered in various substances of unidentified origins. Used toilet paper was stacked up and overflowing in the garbage cans. The shower floors were a disaster. One brave soul had to tackle that mess every morning during work time.

I vowed I would never, ever clean the bathrooms. Work time was my least favourite part of being in Mexico. I spent the first morning praying that God would change my attitude. When the tasks were called out on that first day, bathroom volunteers were needed. To my horror, I felt the urge to volunteer. I fought the urge and was stuck on the cement crew. This proved to be solid, hard, fulfilling labour. The next day, the incident was repeated. My hand wanted to shoot up and volunteer for the ultimate horror, bathrooms; but I resisted again and worked cement until I was blistered.

Finally, on the third morning, I reluctantly raised my hand and was selected. It was then I realized this was the first opportunity I had to serve God by doing something I really, really hated doing. So I decided to embrace it. I picked up the garbage overflow, cleaned the counters and mopped out the showers. And, then, I met the toilet brush.

I have a fear of toilets. I hate the smell. I hate the look. So I decided to confront that fear and embrace the toilet brush. I saw things that day that human eyes should never see. Some of it was gross enough to make me actively gag. Some of it still haunts my nightmares. Yet, it was one of the most amazing mornings of my life. I even *enjoyed* scrubbing out urinals and shower floors! It was probably the most disgusting thing I have ever done; but I knew God wanted me to do it, and I went for it. I was blessed.

I realized this was the first opportunity I had to serve God by doing something I really, really hated doing. So I decided to embrace it. I picked up the garbage overflow, cleaned the counters and mopped out the showers.

And, then, I met the toilet brush

I suppose the lesson learned here is that it isn't always easy to be obedient to God. Sometimes, we have to do things we don't like. Sometimes, we have to do things we actively despise. Yet, when we are obedient, God will bless our socks off.

God also showed himself to me with a little girl. The second night we were

in San Quintin, we went to one of the dirtiest migrant camps in the area. It was called Los Polgas, "the camp of the fleas." It was absolutely gross. People were packed in the rows of shacks like cattle. Flies were everywhere. The playground was comprised of twisted hunks of scrap metal. The dusty streets were often soggy from old dishwater and bathwater. A stale smoke smell lingered over the camp. Broken glass and jagged metal edges stuck out everywhere. A profoundly drunk man with a large hunting knife staggered around beside us as we toured the camp and gave the kids "caballo" or piggyback rides.

When we eventually settled down to watch the film set up on the back of one of the trucks, a little girl with whom I had been playing settled down into my lap and was immediately transfixed by the images on the screen. I took the time to study her. She was about three or four years old. Her surprisingly clean, sweet-smelling hair was in pigtails, and she had huge, dark eyes with long lashes. I gazed at her tiny hands wrapped around my thumbs in wonder. Whenever the movie went off, she'd turn around and give me a big kiss and an awkward hug and, then, snuggle back down into my lap. I can't describe what I felt that night other than love. I loved this little girl so much I thought my heart would burst. That was another night when I wept for joy.

The lesson learned was two-part. First, if we let God show us, he will give us glimpses of his love — pure and unconditional. I learned the second simple lesson when a little girl sat contentedly on my lap watching a movie that was way over her head. Despite living in a dusty, flea-bitten pit full of drunks and danger and evil, she seemed happy. What I learned is that our circumstances are not important; it's what we make of them. If we can accept what we were born into and be content with what people have to offer us, we will have a rich life. R

Katrina Edgerton-McGhan, a Grade 12 student, is an active member of the youth group at St. Andrew's Church in Duncan, B.C.

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Ted Siverns



Among the tombs: psychiatric disorders & evil overcome

All healing, whether through drugs, surgery, stress reduction or prayer, involves God

Luke 8:26-39

This passage has been difficult and/or an embarrassment for interpreters through the years. The story is told in Luke, Matthew (8:28-9:1) and Mark (5:1-20).

The setting is somewhere on or by the Sea of Galilee, in a place that is called by a variety of names including Gergesa, Gennesaret or Gerasa. Jesus was confronted by a man with "an unclean spirit" — demon-possessed, a demoniac. The name of the condition changes through the years, but the condition of severe madness is familiar.

The man lived naked in the tombs — a condition that is not rare even today. Those with serious mental disabilities in some of our institutions lived in conditions that were like a horrible prison only a few years ago. Now, many of those people live on the streets, in conditions that are not far off the tombs around the Sea of Galilee.

What causes mental disorders? The moon — thus "lunatic asylums" from the Latin *luna* meaning "moon"? Chemical imbalance? Heredity? Physical trauma? A virus? In this passage, it appears Jesus shared the thinking of his time that mental disorders were the result of the indwelling of evil.

Why evil? First, because the power of evil was taken seriously. Second, because it related to experience. For those who suffer from the force of serious mental illness, the sense of being possessed is close to their experience. Most of us understand the feeling of being driven by forces that the better side of us would deny.

The man had been unsuccessfully restrained by chains. A recent account from a remote village in central Pakistan told of mentally disturbed people being chained for weeks, months, even years. Here they remain until they die or become passive and, thus, "cured." Restraint, whether physical through electrical shock or chemically induced, is still a way of managing mental disorders.

When Jesus met the demoniac, the man expressed fear, saying, "Do not torment me." Evil is always afraid of good.

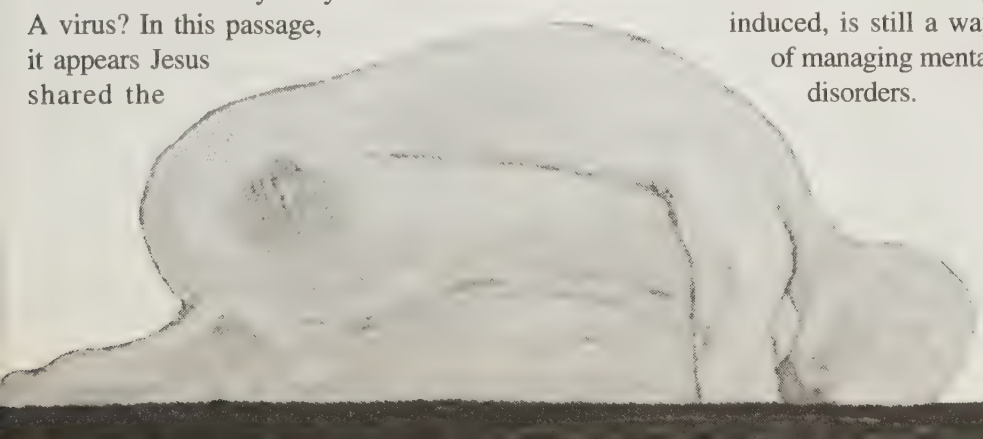
When asked his name, the man replied "Legion" — the Greek word for a regiment of soldiers. The more demons, the worse the mental disturbance; so *legion* suggests not hundreds but thousands of demons. Today, we speak of "multiple personalities." The opposite of *legion* is the unity or wholeness (c.f., "holiness") of an integrated personality.

More of life is uncharted than charted. More of life is unknown than known. There is a religious dimension to our demons.

There is a faith dimension to our cures

Knowing they could not win against Jesus, the demons negotiated being transferred to a herd of pigs. Pigs were unclean (e.g., Leviticus 11:7 and Deuteronomy 14:8) and, presumably, their loss would gain little sympathy with Jews. In this case, the self-destructive power of evil was evident as the herd rushed over a cliff and the pigs were drowned in the sea. The man was cured!

All healing, whether through drugs, surgery, stress reduction or prayer, involves God. More of life is uncharted than charted. More of life is unknown than known. There is a religious dimension to our demons. There is a faith dimension to our cures. The miracles of



the New Testament suggest seeing a different and deeper dimension to life. It is not that miracles depart from the natural order but that they lift us out of the natural order, out of the dimension in which we are accustomed to move, and introduce us to another dimension of existence. The miracles of the New Testament show God thwarting evil in a powerful and persuasive way, and alluring men and women to a life that is lived beyond the power of evil and death as the be-all and end-all.

Health and salvation, wholeness and holiness are related words. God is opposed to sickness; Jesus blamed the demonic powers for disease, sickness and death. Love and compassion are what medicine sometimes calls the placebo and Hawthorne effects. They have a major therapeutic benefit on all who suffer.

This is a miracle story — something wondrous from God with its immediate cause hidden from human observation. If we ask about the meaning of the passage for the Gospel writers, we are likely to conclude it shows that, in Jesus, God frees us from and overcomes the power of evil.

At the conclusion of these verses, the local people were apprehensive and asked Jesus to go away; but the healed man (the word also means "saved") was ready to follow Jesus. Jesus told the man: "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." The passage ends with the man departing to tell others about "how much Jesus had done for him." R

For discussion and reflection

- How far have we progressed in our understanding of mental illness?
- Why Luke's "I beseech you" (8:28) instead of Mark's "I adjure you by God" (5:7)?
- Read and consider Paul's understanding of the possessive power of evil in Romans 7:14-24.
- Why has this passage been described as a missionary story?

L. E. (Ted) Siverns is the minister of First Church in New Westminster, B.C.

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The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else *by Hernando de Soto (Basic Books, 2000, $41.50). Reviewed by Rod Kerr.*

The intriguing question raised by the subtitle has a single answer with many ramifications, according to de Soto. The theme of the book is, simply, that, to work to the benefit of all, capitalism requires a proper system of recording and protecting property rights, a fact of life in the West but not in many Third World countries. A property titles system, streamlined of red tape and accessible to the poor, is held to be vitally important. For starters, only with a workable title system can real property become "capital," whether through sale, lease or borrowing against a mortgage. Add to that the difficulty of accessing utilities without an address, the absence of a tax base to finance needed government services, and the many other problems cited by the author.

The book is both a presentation of the theory and a manual for its implementation. The author uses case studies; illustrations of the impossibly cumbersome title systems in various jurisdictions which sometimes require years for property transfer; and arguments to try to reconcile the interests of the poor, governments, reformers, lawyers and the mapmakers.

De Soto is a Peruvian economist and president of The Institute for Liberty and Democracy. Pragmatically, at least, he is a capitalist theorist, and an activist in helping squatter populations all over the world to negotiate and secure titles to the properties they have occupied, in some cases, for many decades.

The book bears the warm endorsement of such icons of the right as Margaret Thatcher, William F. Buckley Jr. and Milton Friedman and, yet, in theme and intent, should merit the attention of social activists of every ideological stripe.

Rod Kerr, a retired bond portfolio manager in Toronto, is an apologist for the market system.

Audio

Sing to the Lord a New Song *by the chancel choir of Oakridge Presbyterian Church, London, Ont. (2000, $18 CD, $15 tape).*
Flautissimo *by Anita Evans accompanied by Janet Fischer. Reviewed by Jim Czegledi.*

Sing to the Lord a New Song proves that what is new is old again. This CD features a wide selection of musical styles ranging through spiritual, traditional and contemporary. The selections are sung by the 50-member chancel choir at Oakridge Church, London, Ontario, led by organist Janet Fischer. The strength of this work is in the harmony and clarity of the choir's singing. Primarily featuring organ and piano accompaniment, this CD offers a nice mix of congas, violins and flute. Its contemplative, easy-listening style makes *Sing to the Lord a New Song* music to be inspired by.

Flautissimo is a selection of sacred and secular songs, featuring the harmonies of pianist Janet Fischer and flautist Anita Evans of Oakridge Church. The meditative tone of this CD lends itself to reflective listening.

These CDs provide the quiet that helps us to be still and hear the quiet inner voice of the Spirit.

Jim Czegledi is associate secretary for evangelism, church growth and worship, Life and Mission Agency.

Most books reviewed may be purchased through The Book Room, 50 Wynford Dr., North York, Ont. M3C 1J7. Prices include shipping and handling but not GST. Do not send payment with order. An invoice will follow. Please include name and location of congregation. Toll-free order line: 1-800-619-7301, ext. 301, e-mail: bookroom@presbyterian.ca.

briefly noted

Mission staff arrivals and departures
Arrivals: *Marlene Buwalda*, from Taiwan, July 4.
Departures: *Pauline Brown*, for India, June 28; *Denise Van Wissen*, for Nicaragua, July.

Deaths: *Mabel Booth*, 86, deaconess and longtime WMS field worker, April 18, 2001.

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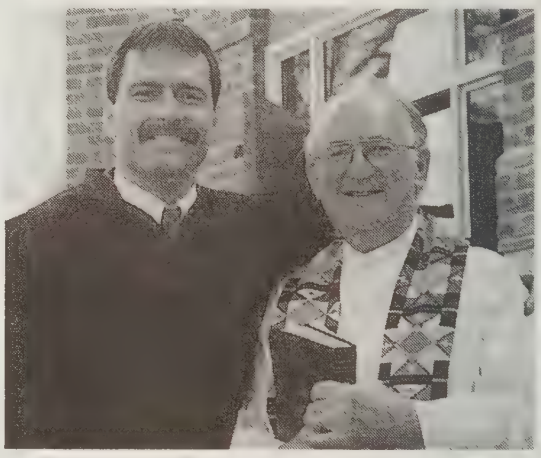


PARTICIPANTS IN THE Sarnia presbyterial annual summer outing were guests of MPP Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex) at the Ontario Legislature. Then the group saw mission in action when members visited Evangel Hall, an inner-city mission in downtown Toronto.



THE CHOIR AND CONGREGATION OF St. Giles Church, Peterborough, Ont., celebrated the year 2000 by presenting the cantata *Footprints of Praise*. Written by Rev. Kees and Darlene Vandermey of Knox Church, Elora, Ont., the cantata highlights the church year from Advent to Easter using hymns from the *Book of Praise* and appropriate readings.

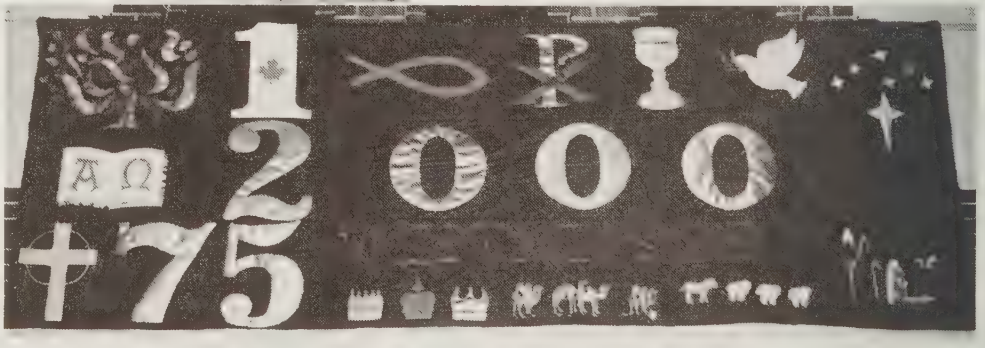
THE 102ND ANNIVERSARY SERVICE of St. Andrew's Church, Coldwater, Ont., was held Oct. 15, with Rev. Ian Johnston (right) the guest speaker. Rev. Ed Hoekstra (left), minister of St. Andrew's, was assisted by Ada Westinbrink and June Bishop of the board of managers in laying the cornerstone for a new addition to the church. (Photo: David E. Rouse)



A MILLENNIUM BANNER was dedicated at Westminster Church, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., on Oct. 29. The banner was designed by George Ormston, who served as the project's organizer, with the assistance of Jackie McEwen. The banner was divided into 18 units that could be stitched separately and then assembled. Several women in the congregation contributed their talents and time to creating the banner.



THE LADIES AID OF First Church, Seaforth, Ont., marked 100 years of continuous service in 2000. A special service was held honouring past and current members. Pictured (L to R) are: Edith McMillan, Jean Keys, Margaret Sharp, Viola Taylor, Mary McClure, Viola Lawson (president), Mabel Wright, Beulah MacKay and Alice Reid. (Absent: Edith Coleman, Dorothy Papple, Marjorie Dale)



Please note: Photos submitted for People & Places must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they are to be returned. Also, please try to ensure all pictures are clear and do not include a multitude of people. Colour or black-and-white photos are acceptable, but negatives and slides cannot be used. Thank you.

CHALMERS CHURCH, Hamilton, Ont., dedicated a "quiet room" in memory of Ruth and Bob Chapman on Dec. 24. The Chapmans, veteran missionaries in Africa with Wycliffe Bible Translators, and longtime friends of the Chalmers congregation, were killed in the crash of a commercial airliner off the coast of Africa last year. Pictured are (L to R) Betty Corbett, Joyce Smith and Trevor Thomson who planned the renovation of the room.





AILEEN AND JOHN MACDONALD, and one of Aileen's donkeys, Kiltie of Skye, provided the outdoor Nativity scene at the Christmas Eve service at St. Andrew's Church, Calgary. Visiting Mary and Joseph is Rev. Marion Barclay.



THE CONGREGATION OF Albion Gardens Church, Etobicoke, Ont., honoured Margaret Marchment for her long and dedicated service as an elder and member, prior to her move to a retirement residence in Georgetown, Ont. Rev. Sarah Kim is shown giving Marg a hug after presenting her with a commemorative plaque.

CAPTAIN FANNING THE FLAMES paid a visit to First Church, Trail, B.C., on Presbyterians Sharing... Sunday. When he's not changing in phone booths, the captain is better known as Rev. Gavin Robertson.





THE SESSION AND CONGREGATION of St. Andrew's Church, Cobden, Ont., elected last fall to try term eldership and began with seven new serving elders: (back, left to right) Shelley Bulmer, Faith Stephens and Murray Sutherland; (front) Paul Boese, Jim White, George Hooper and Allan Dick.



THE CONGREGATION AND SESSION of St. Paul's Church, Bramalea, Ont., presented Edmund Johnston with a certificate congratulating him on 50 years of service as a Presbyterian elder. Edmund, seen here with Rev. Wayne Baswick, was inducted as an elder at St. Enoch's Church, Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1950 and he continues to serve on the session at St. Paul's. (Photo by Colin M. Gray)



LAKESHORE ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, Tecumseh, Ont., held its first Difference Makers Conference the weekend of Oct. 20. More than 125 people attended the event.



THE YOUNG PEOPLE of Knox Church, Victoria, presented guest preacher Rev. Glenn Inglis with a cheque for $200 to purchase insecticide-treated mosquito nets to combat malaria in Malawi. Some of the young people are pictured with Glenn (far left), Marion Crockett of the WMS and Rev. Cecil Kirk, minister of Knox.



THE PRESBYTERY OF WINNIPEG held a Service of Celebration and Jubilee at Rainbow Stage, an outdoor theatre in Kildonan Park, Winnipeg, on Sept. 10. About 500 people gathered for the service, held to mark the 125th anniversary of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. A freewill offering was received in support of three missions within the presbytery: Anamiewigumig in Kenora, Ont., and Anishinabe Fellowship and Flora House, both in Winnipeg. After the service, a cake composed of blue and white cupcakes arranged to highlight the number "2000" was served in the park's picnic area.



AN OFFICIAL "Welcome to Calgary White Hat Presentation" was made to Rev. Ken and Sibbie Borden during a brunch held to welcome them to Varsity Acres Church. The new westerners were joined by Elizabeth Wesley (left), a member of the Calgary Airport White Hatters Association who made the presentation, and Joan Stillmack, clerk of session.

TWO CHURCH BANNERS, designed and made by Rev. Stephen Cho (far left), minister of Greenock Church, St. Andrew's, N.B., were presented to the congregation on Thanksgiving Home-Coming Sunday.



DEATHS

ALLAN, REV. JOHN NEIL MURDOCH, died in his 81st year on March 22, 2001, in Vancouver General Hospital. He is survived by his wife, Ernestine; son Grant, daughter-in-law Margaret; granddaughters Katherine, Jennifer and Heather; his sister, Jeanie Moss, and her family.

John Allan was born in Vancouver on July 26, 1920, and raised on the Sunshine Coast at Stillwater and Powell River. The family subsequently moved to West Vancouver where John attended West Vancouver High School. His early years consisted of schooling in West Vancouver and spending summers with his father, who worked in the forest industry at various sites along the coast of British Columbia. Early in his life, he developed an interest in marine life and a deep appreciation for the rugged wilderness of the West Coast.

John attended the University of British Columbia, studying biology and zoology, but found his studies interrupted by the Second World War. He joined the medical branch of the Royal Canadian Navy and was trained to run a sick-bay. He served on the *HMCS Prince Rupert* (K324) from its commissioning in 1943 until the end of the war, making 18 transatlantic crossings in convoy.

After the war, John returned to UBC where, as a member of the music society, he met Ernestine Summers, an accompanist for the glee club. They married on September 17, 1948. After finishing his studies at UBC, John attended Knox College, Toronto, and upon graduation was appointed to Port Alberni, B.C., his first full-time charge. During this time, John developed his interest in oil painting, and he and Ernestine celebrated the arrival of their son, Grant. After Port Alberni, John served the church in Nelson, Murrayville and Newton. During his ministry at Newton, he also served as chaplain to the fire hall and was both a member and, later, convener of the Camp Douglas Committee of the Presbytery of Westminster.

In 1966, John returned to his zoological background and joined the Vancouver Public Aquarium as an aquarist. After moving back to Vancouver, John and Ernestine found new joy in their fellowship at Central Presbyterian Church, with John on the board of managers and Ernestine in the choir and, eventually, on the pipe organ.

John's retirement in 1985 allowed him to pursue his love of painting once again and, with Ernestine, a shared love of opera and tours to Seattle, San Francisco and New York for new productions. In recent years, he continued reading and pursuing his interests in many fields, despite a hip injury seven years ago that made walking and climbing stairs difficult.

A service of remembrance and thanksgiving for his life was held on March 27, 2001, at Central Presbyterian Church. The Presbytery of Westminster extends its sympathy to Ernestine and the family. John Allan touched the lives of many people as he served his Lord.

FERGUSON, REV. DR. JAMES, died December 15, 1999, in Stratford, Ontario.

One of the greatest accolades that can be given is the statement that The Rev.____ was a great churchman or churchwoman. This is not a statement about someone of high-born theology but a recognition of a person whose love was the Lord and the church, and that this love shaped his or her ministry. James Ferguson was one such churchman. From his birth in Scotland in 1911 to his death, he was a man who enabled others to know that life in the church was a life that meant growth and service. Educated in Hamilton, Toronto and Waterloo, he brought this knowledge to others in a manner that made it accessible to the folk he served faithfully at Beamsville, Barrie and Stratford. His service was recognized by a Doctor of Divinity degree bestowed in 1975 by Knox College.

All who knew Dr. Ferguson also admired his co-minister, his wife Jeane, who predeceased him in 1995.

A firm believer that the church was not a place to retreat to but a place to come from, Dr. Ferguson was on the board of Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie, Ont., a member of the boards of the Children's Aid Society and the Red Cross. He was also an active member of the Kiwanis Club, the Masonic Lodge and The Rose Croix. His activities were not only at the local level, he also served as president of the Ontario Hospital Association. While in Barrie, his service to the community was recognized when he was named Citizen of the Year.

When the Fergusons moved to Stratford in 1960, they soon became involved in the life of that community. Dr. Ferguson was a member of the board of the Stratford General Hospital (chair for four years), a member of the Kiwanis Club and, at the national church level, chair of The Presbyterian Church in Canada Committee on Education. All this was done while conducting an active parish ministry.

Following his retirement in 1980, Dr. Ferguson still remained active in his many community interests, and it was a loss to family, friends and colleagues when he died in 1999. James Ferguson epitomized, in his quiet, caring way, a level of ministry that those of us to whom it has now been entrusted can only hope to attain.

Dr. Ferguson was predeceased by his wife, Jeane, in 1995 and his daughter, Deborah Low, in 1973. He is survived by his son, James, and his wife, Brenda; grandchildren Lindsey, Brett and Leah; and son-in-law, Dr. Alan Low.

KING, REV. DR. KINGSLEY E., passed away peacefully into the presence of our Lord on March 2, 2001.

Kingsley was born on July 28, 1923, in Chatham, Ontario, where he lived and attended school until the beginning of the Second World War. He served with the Royal Canadian Air Force from January 1941 to November 1945. He was attached to the #430 Spitfire Squadron as a Second Lieutenant and served in England, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

Upon his return, he attended the University of Toronto, graduating in 1950 with a BA degree. He proceeded to Knox College. After graduation, he was ordained and inducted as a minister of Knox Presbyterian Church, New Westminster, B.C., on July 14, 1953. He subsequently served as minister in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Calgary, from 1961 to 1974 and in Dixie Presbyterian Church, Mississauga, Ont., from 1974 to 1994 when he retired. In 1992, he received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Knox College.

Kingsley was devoted to his family: his wife of 35 years, Elaine; his son, Kevin, and his wife, Rachelle; his daughter, Keri, and her husband, John; and his precious grandchildren, Kaitlyn, Melissa, Michael and Kyle.

ANDERSON, AUDREY, who lived the Easter message, died on Easter Sunday, April 15, 2001, in Barrie, Ont. Audrey was the much loved wife (for 59 years) of David. Left with many happy family memories are daughters Bonnie Craw, June Holohan (Ewart '67), Linda Anderson, Norine Keevil, Heather Dunn and their families. Audrey's faith was shown in caring acts of ministering to others. She was very active in St. Andrew's, Barrie, elder for 28 years, nursing home visitor, life member of WMS. Living now in a

The Transitions column welcomes announcements of special events such as births, marriages, anniversaries, graduations, baptisms and the reception of new members, as well as death notices. The rate is $1 per word or $50 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.
All notices of pulpit vacancies, recognitions, ordinations and inductions will be charged to the congregation: $10 for the basic notice and $1 per word for additional information. (There will be no charge to congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.)
Contact the *Record* office regarding all items for the Transitions column.

new way, Audrey continues to help others through the donation of her corneas.

BEACOCK, NORA EDITH, 93, faithful member of St. John's, Port Perry, Ont., died April 10, 2001.

FORSYTH, EDWARD, passed away March 12, 2001, after a courageous battle with cancer. Elder and Sunday school superintendent, St. Matthew's, Montreal; trustee, elder, St. Mark's, Malton, Ont.

HAGGANS, JOHN M., 81, on April 9, 2001. Many years elder and clerk of session, St. Andrew's, Windsor, Ont. Captain with the Essex Scottish in WWII; member Military Institute; many years on the executive board of Windsor Light Opera with his wife, May, who survives him.

McMAHON, GLADYS D., organist of St. Paul's, Galahad, Alta., 1957-1997, passed away on Feb. 28, 2001.

INDUCTIONS and RECOGNITIONS

Ewing, Rev. Dr. Linda Brown, Centennial, Calgary, April 29, 2001.

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Melbourne, Que., St. Andrew's. Rev. Ross Davidson, 702 rue Lafontaine, Thetford Mines, Que. G6G 3J6; jrhdavidson@globetrotter.net.

Montreal, Robert Campbell Taiwanese (half-time, English/Taiwanese bilingual assistant). Rev. Harry Kuntz, 92 Rockwyn Ave., Pointe Claire, Que. H9R 1W2.

Morrisburg, Ont., Knox; Dunbar, Dunbar Church. Rev. Mark Bourgon, PO Box 220, Finch, Ont., K0C 1K0; 613-984-0772; mbourgon@glen-net.ca.

Mount Royal, a suburb of Montreal (part-time). Rev. Peter Szabo, 7110 de l'Epee, Montreal, Que. H3N 2E1.

Nepean, Ont., Parkwood (effective July 1, 2001). Rev. J.H.W. Statham, 1220 Old Tenth Line Rd., Orleans, Ont. K1E 3W7.

Ottawa, Westminster. Rev. Alex Mitchell, 2400 Alta Vista Dr., Ottawa, Ont. K1H 7N1.

Pierrefonds, Que., Westminster (part-time). Mr. Elias Saikaly, 4373 Elgin, Pierrefonds, Que. H9H 1T9; e_saikaly@hotmail.com.

Smiths Falls, Ont., Westminster. Rev. Milton A. Fraser, 80 Daniel St. N, Arnprior, Ont. K7S 2K8; 613-623-5531; standrew@storm.ca.

Synod of Toronto and Kingston

Ajax, St. Andrew's. Rev. E.J. Briard, 255 Wright Cres., Ajax, Ont. L1S 5S5.

Cambridge, Central. Rev. Mark Richardson, 10 Zeller Dr., Kitchener, Ont. N2A 4A8; kepc@golden.net.

Cambridge, St. Andrew's Hespeler. Rev. Wayne Dawes, 2 Grand Ave. S, Cambridge, Ont. N1S 2L2.

Cambridge, St. Giles. Rev. Linda Ashfield, 50 Erb St. W, Waterloo, Ont. N2L 1T1; ashfield@nonline.net.

Campbellville, St. David's; Nassagaweya (half-time associate minister at Nassagaweya). Rev. Ian McWhinnie, 3535 South Common Ct., Mississauga, Ont. L5L 2B3; 905-820-9860; ian.mcwhinnie@sympatico.ca.

Colborne, Old St. Andrew's; Brighton, St. Andrew's. Rev. Doug Brown, 200 King St. W, Cobourg, Ont. K9A 2N1.

Crieff, Knox (half-time). Rev. Thomas J. Kay, 20 Quebec St., Guelph, Ont. N1H 2T4; thomas@knoxguelph.ca.

Etobicoke, Mimico. Rev. Susanne Rescorl, 680 Annette St., Toronto, Ont. M6S 2C8; 416-767-2689; fax 416-767-1229.

Fenelon Falls, St. Andrew's; Knox, Glenarm. Rev. Doug Scott, RR 1, 22 Hillview Dr., Bobcaygeon, Ont. K0M 1A0.

Fergus, St. Andrew's. Rev. Linda Bell, 2 Cross St., Elmira, Ont. N3B 2S4; drbell@execulink.com.

Guelph, St. Andrew's. Rev. William Johnston, 54 Queen St. N, Kitchener, Ont. N2H 2H2.

Markham, Chapel Place. Rev. George Beals, 10058 Yonge St., Richmond Hill, Ont. L4C 1T8. Potential candidates must have an intimate knowledge of Middle Eastern culture and be thoroughly fluent in Arabic and English.

Nobleton, St. Paul's. Rev. Sam Priestley, 143 Main St. N, Markham, Ont. L3P 1Y2.

Orillia, Orillia (St. Andrew's), (effective Sept./Oct. 2001). Rev. Donald McKillican, 99 Peter St. N, Orillia, Ont. L3V 4Z3.

Orillia, St. Mark's. Rev. Carey Nieuwhof, RR 1, Comp. 126, Hawkestone, Ont. L0L 1T0; cnieuwhof@trinitycommunity.org; 705-487-1998.

Oshawa, Knox. Rev. Lois Whitwell, The Search Committee, 147 Simcoe St. N, Oshawa, Ont. L1J 4S6; gorddi@durham.net.

Port Carling, Knox; Torrance, Zion. Rev. Michael Barnes, 45 McMurray St., Bracebridge, Ont. P1L 2A1; 705-645-4521.

Puslinch, Duff's. Rev. Don McCallum, 795 Scottsdale Dr., Guelph, Ont. N1G 3R8.

Scarborough, Clairlea Park (part time). Rev. Dr. Ian Clark, 3236 St. Clair Ave. E, Toronto, Ont. M1L 1V7.

Scarborough, Westminster. Rev. Wallace Whyte, 20 Guildwood Pkwy. #1104, Toronto, Ont. M1E 5B6; w.g.whyte@sympatico.ca.

Sudbury, Hillside-Knox pastoral charge. Rev. Dan Reeves, 1114 Auger St., Sudbury, Ont. P3A 4B2; 705-566-0652; calvinpc@hotmail.com.

Toronto, Calvin. Rev. G. Cameron Brett, 75 Simcoe St., Toronto, Ont. M5J 1W9; cbrett@standrewstoronto.org.

Toronto, Malvern. Rev. Duncan Cameron, 115 St. Andrews Rd., Toronto, Ont. M1P 4N2; d.cameron@sympatico.ca.

Toronto, Patterson. Rev. Gordon Fish, 15 Lambeth Rd., Toronto, Ont. M9A 2Y6.

Toronto, St. Giles Kingsway. Rev. John Borthwick, 2314 Islington Ave., Toronto, Ont. M9W 5W9; 416-741-1530; barley.is@home.com.

Toronto, Toronto Korean (full-time associate minister in charge of English-speaking ministry). Rev. Cheol Soon Park, 67 Scarsdale Rd., North York, Ont. M3B 2R2; 416-447-5963.

Toronto, Trinity York Mills. Rev. John Congram, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, Ont. M3C 1J7; jcongram@presbyterian.ca.

Toronto, Westminster. Rev. Nicholas Athanasiadis, 670 Eglinton Ave. E, Toronto, Ont. M4G 2K4; nathans@idirect.ca.

Tweed, St. Andrew's. Rev. A.D. MacLeod, 16 Marmora St., Trenton, Ont. K8V 2H5.

Unionville, Unionville Church. Rev. Robert Smith, 271 Centre St., Thornhill, Ont. L4J 1G5; tpchurch@aims.on.ca.

Uptergrove, Knox; East Oro, Essen; Jarratt, Willis. Rev. Tim Purvis, Box 26, Stayner, Ont. L0M 1S0; seraph@sympatico.ca.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Amherstburg, St. Andrew's (effective July 2001). Rev. Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9E 1Z5; 519-972-3627.

Appin, Appin Church; Melbourne, Guthrie. Rev. Brian Nichol, RR 1, Dutton, Ont. N0L 1J0; 519-762-3724; revrev@webgate.net.

Atwood, Atwood Church. Rev. Olwyn Coughlin,

RR 1, Listowel, Ont. N4W 3G6; owacoughlin@earthlink.net; 519-291-1180.

Beamsville, St. Andrew's; Smithville. Rev. Donna J. Riseborough, 202-2 Ferndale Ave., St. Catharines, Ont. L2P 3X8; driseborough@sympatico.ca.

Beechwood, St. Andrew's; Centre Road, Knox; Kerwood, West Adelaide. Rev. Kristine O'Brien, 152 Albert St., Strathroy, Ont. N7G 1V5; kristine@golden.net.

Chatham, St. James. Rev. Ian McDonald, 60 Fifth St., Chatham, Ont. N7M 4V7; 519-352-2313; i.mcdonald@sympatico.ca.

Listowel, Knox. Rev. Nicholas Vandermey, Box 663, Seaforth, Ont. N0K 1W0.

London, Elmwood Avenue. Rev. Andrew Human, 55 Hincks St., St. Thomas, Ont. N5R 3N9; revhuman@execulink.com.

Milverton, Burns; North Mornington. Search Committee, 66 Main St. N, Milverton, Ont. N0K 1M0.

Monkton, Knox; Cranbrook, Knox. Rev. Peter Bush, Box 235, Mitchell, Ont. N0K 1N0; 519-348-9080; knoxmit@quadro.net.

Petrolia, St. Andrew's; Dawn, Knox. Rev. Philip Wilson, PO Box 1381, Corunna, Ont. N0N 1G0.

Point Edward, Point Edward Church (part-time). Rev. James Sloan, 268 Dantiki Ct., Corunna, Ont. N0N 1G0.

Priceville, St. Andrew's (half-time). Rev. Scott Sinclair, 865 Second Ave. W, Owen Sound, Ont. N4K 4M6.

Stratford, Knox. Rev. Rick Horst, PO Box 247, St. Marys, Ont. N4X 1B1.

Thamesville, St. James; Duart. Rev. Jack Neil, Box 1148, Ridgetown, Ont. N0P 2C0; 519-674-3487.

Windsor, Chinese (Cantonese-speaking, part-time). Rev. Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9E 1Z5.

Windsor, Minister to begin a new outreach project near the University of Windsor. Rev. Hugh Appèl, Convener, Knox Presbyterian Church, 251 Duncan at Wellington, Wallaceburg, Ont. N8A 5G5; knox@kent.net.

Wyoming, St. Andrew's; Camlachie, Knox. Rev. Raymond Hodgson, 261 N. Christina St., Sarnia, Ont. N7T 5V4; 519-332-2662; raymond.hodgson@sympatico.ca.

Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Carberry, Man., Knox-Zion. Rev. Gladys Anderson, Box 553, Neepawa, Man. R0J 1H0; fax 204-476-5387; gmander@escape.ca.

Flin Flon, Man., St. Andrew's (full-time ordained minister with interest in developing a centre for rural and remote ministries). Rev. Dale Woods, 339-12th St., Brandon, Man. R7A 4M3; phone 204-727-5874; fax 204-728-7037; fpc@escape.ca.

Fort Frances, Ont., St. Andrew's. Rev. Bert Vancook, 207 South Brodie St., Thunder Bay, Ont. P7E 1C1; presby1@baynet.net.

Kenora, Ont., First. Rev. Beth M. McCutcheon, 1476 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Man. R3G 0W3.

Thunder Bay, Ont., Calvin. Rev. Mark McLennan, 635 Grey St., Thunder Bay, Ont. P7E 2E4; markmac@lakehead.net.

Winnipeg, St. Andrew's-Calvin (joint charge seeking full-time minister). Rev. John Hogerwaard, 341 Eveline St. at McLean Ave., Selkirk, Man. R1A 1M9; 204-482-6425.

Synod of Saskatchewan

Swift Current, St. Andrew's (part-time). Rev. Andrew Apack Song, Box 1295, Moose Jaw, Sask. S6H 4P9; apackson@home.com.

Yorkton, Knox; Dunleath. Rev. Deborah Lannon, 2170 Albert St., Regina, Sask. S4P 2T9; dalfor@dlcwest.com.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Calgary, St. Andrew's (co-minister, special responsibilities for youth, young adults, pastoral care). Rev. Kirk Summers, 290 Edgepark Blvd. NW, Calgary, Alta. T3A 4H4; 403-241-1443; ksummers@cadvision.com.

Calgary, Varsity Acres (co-minister). Rev. Dianne Ollerenshaw, 344 Coach Ridge Rise SW, Calgary, Alta. T3H 1G1; ollerend@cadvision.com; Web site: www.cadvision.com/vapc.

Medicine Hat, Riverside. Rev. Fiona Wilkinson, Box 566, Bassano, Alta. T0J 0B0; fax 403-641-4091; fiona@eidnet.org.

Medicine Hat, St. John's (interim minister to begin Sept. 1). Rev. Dr. Roy Gellatly, 1306 13th Ave. S, Lethbridge, Alta. T1K 0R5; gellat-r@agt.net.

North Peace Territorial Ministry. Rev. Shirley Cochrane, PO Box 37, Wanham, Alta. T0H 3P0; 780-694-2185; scochran@telusplanet.net.

Synod of British Columbia

Burnaby, Gordon. Rev. Guy Sinclair, 2597 Bourquin Cres. E, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1Y6.

Castlegar, Grace. Rev. Doug Johns, Box 255, Creston, B.C. V0B 1G0; johnsy@kootenay.com.

New Westminster, Knox. Rev. Dr. J.H. (Hans) Kouwenberg, 2597 Bourquin Cres. E, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1Y6; calvinpresb@telus.net.

Vancouver, Central. Rev. Bruce McAndless-Davis, 1320 7th Ave., New Westminster, B.C. V3M 2K1; 604-526-4914; fax 604-543-7597; bruce@staidans.bc.ca.

Vancouver, Chinese (associate minister for English-language service). Rev. Robert Allison, 1179 Cloverley St., North Vancouver, B.C. V7L 1N7; fax 604-988-4773.

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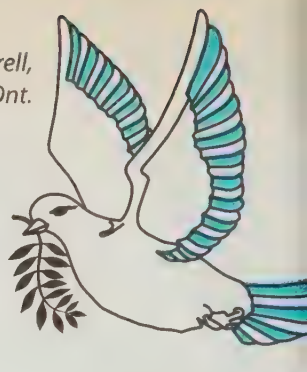
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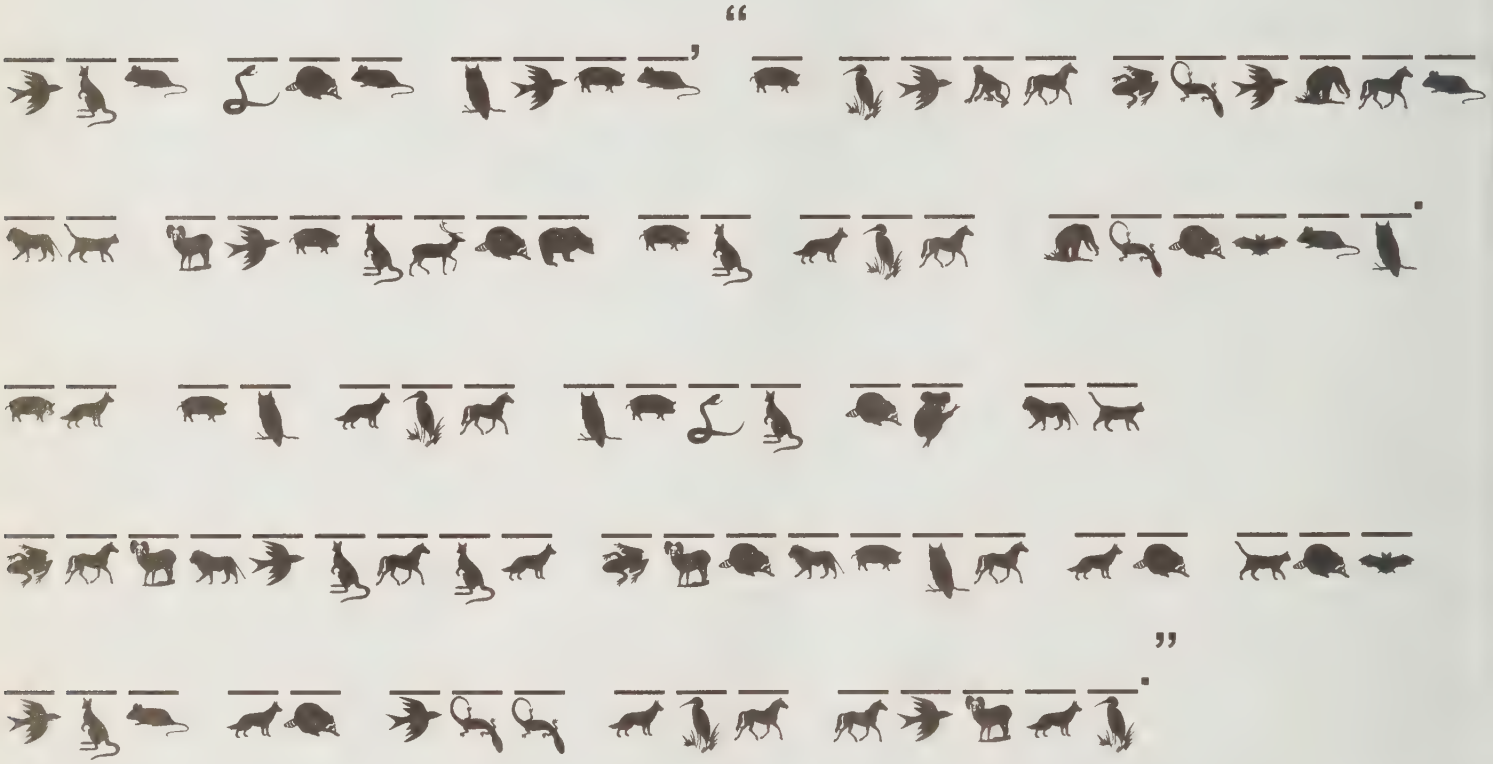
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called to wonder

Written by Jennifer O'Farrell,
St. Mark's Church, Don Mills, Ont.

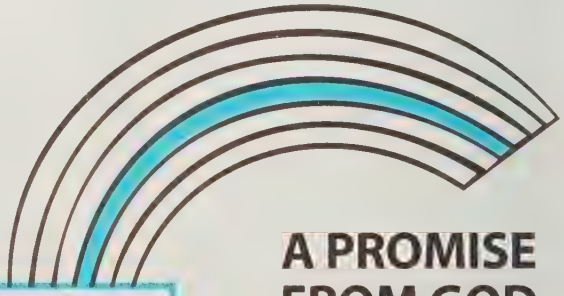


These Bible verses, from Genesis 9:12-14 (*New Living Translation*), are written in a secret code. Look for the many living creatures of the earth that were on the ark with Noah and match them up with the letters of the alphabet. After you decode it, you will know God's message for today and always.





See decoded message on page 33.

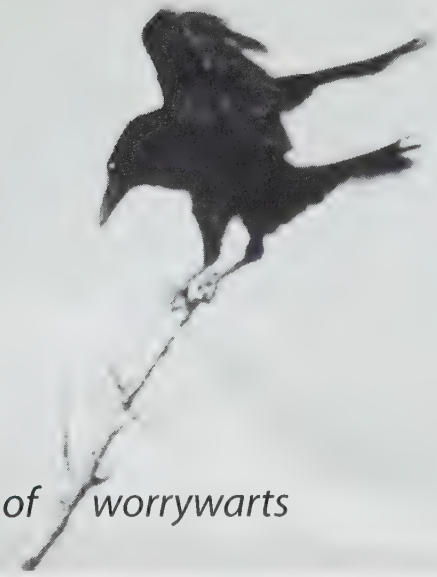


A PROMISE FROM GOD TO YOU

Link to more learning activities online at:
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David Webber

Bird sense



Taking the decision to leave the clan of worrywarts

I am a Presbyterian minister and, although I am not Scottish, I know many dear people of the Thistle Isle. The history and the clans of Scotland hold great attraction for me. Sometimes, I have yearned to belong to a Scottish clan with a wee burr in its accent, a lovely plaid tartan, a coat of arms and a stirring bagpipe theme tune. But, alas, the clan I do belong to is not Scottish. It has no flashy tartan from which to cobble up kilts to wear. It does not have a classy coat of arms to dangle over the entranceway of the family home. It has no stirring bagpipe tune to march or dance to. Rather, we wear a furrowed brow, a cranky demeanour often adorns our home and our theme music is usually a dirge. You see, I belong to a clan of worrywarts.

In my worrywart clan, everything is fair game. Worry about life, death, health, safety, job, shelter, food, clothing, what other people think and much, much more. In fact, my worrywart clan even worries when there is nothing to worry about. "Life is too perfect; something has got to go wrong."

This past summer, we were camping and fishing in a place where three ravens camped over the hill from us. I never visited their campsite, but they certainly frequented ours. One day, I was cleaning some fish on the camp table and worrying about what the game warden was going to do to me if I cut the heads off the fish I was cleaning. According to British Columbia fishing regulations, one is not supposed to remove the heads of fish caught until one has taken them to a permanent place of residence. The fish I was cleaning would not fit into our travel trailer freezer with the heads on. But if I took the heads off, I could be fined by the game warden. I had worked myself up into a worried froth when over the hill came our raven neighbours. They moved in, sat at the table with me and began to eat the choice bits (to them) that I had removed from the fish. They stayed, eating every little bit of the fish offal until I was finished. Then, they moved to the fire pit and sorted through the stuff waiting to be burned with the evening campfire. Finding a few more tidbits, they gulped them down with obvious relish. Then, without a worry in the world, they left to visit the campsite next to us, cawing with thanksgiving as they went. I laid down my pocketknife and considered the ravens.

"Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them"

Jesus said to do just that: "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?" (Luke 12:22-24, *NKJV*).

As I consider the ravens in the light of what Jesus said about them, I find myself having to ask an important question. Do I, or do I not, believe God loves me? If I believe God loves me, at least as much as the ravens, then can I not, with the ravens, trust that God will take care of my needs? If I believe God loves me, at least as much as the ravens, then can I not with the ravens begin to live for the day at hand, rejoicing in that which is provided in it? If I believe that God loves me, at least as much as the ravens, then does not just a little bit of bird sense tell me that worrying about all the things I worry about is senseless? And Jesus insists I am loved a whole lot more than the ravens. What do I make of that?

My anxiety in life is mostly around the future. It is rooted in "what if" kinds of worries. Jesus asks me, "Are you able to add one measure to your life?" My answer, obviously, is no. Jesus replies, "If you can't do something as small as this with regard to the future, then why do you worry about the rest?" God holds the future in his hands, not I. Not only can I do little about what the future holds, I don't even know what the future is.

Consider the ravens. Lately, I have, and I have decided to quit my clan. Worrying is for the birds. And the birds don't.

(A fishing tip from the bird sense fishing gallery: If your trout won't fit in your travel trailer freezer with their heads on and you must leave the heads on according to the fishing regulations, cut them in half.) R

David Webber is a minister of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church, a house church ministry in the Cariboo district of British Columbia.

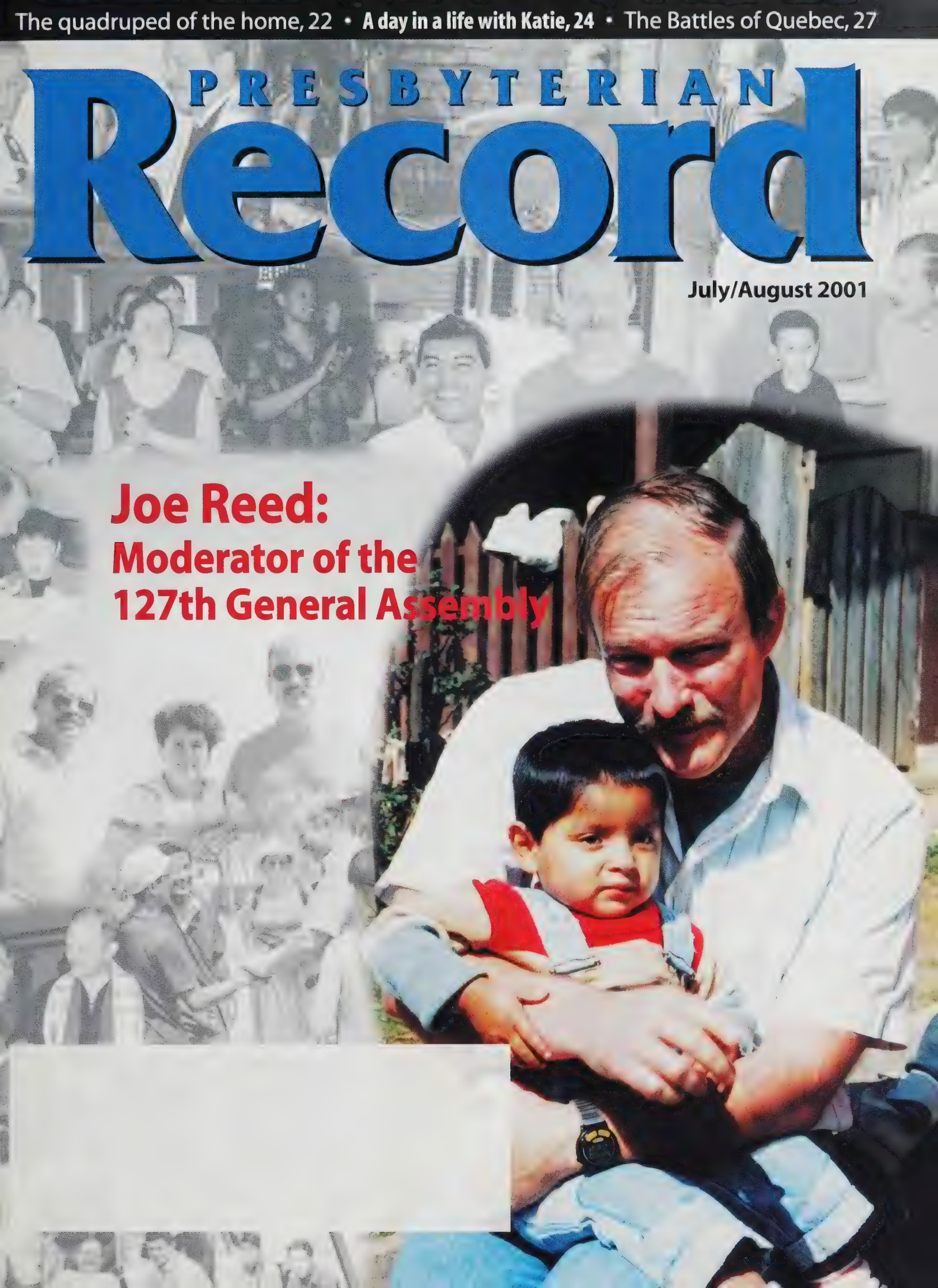

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EQUIPPING THE LAITY

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PRESBYTERIAN
Record

July/August 2001

Joe Reed:
Moderator of the 127th General Assembly



"How do we equip each other? We love one another. We love God with our whole being. We love our neighbours as ourselves."

— Dwight Browns at the 127th General Assembly

The most effective way to cope with change is to help create it.

— James Simpson

Authentic community necessarily implies full participation of women and men on the basis of spiritual gifts, not on the basis of sex.

— Gilbert Bllezikian, the man behind the megachurch

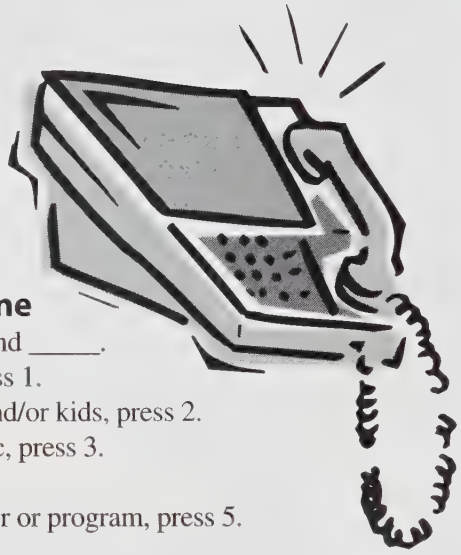
On raising the dead

There is a vast difference between raising the dead and raising hell. Raising hell is frequently motivated by hate and only irritates the dead. Raising the dead is motivated by love and is the task to which all Christians are called.

— John Congram

"I am concerned by the consuming concern in our church about survival. Our focus cannot and must not be on our own survival. To survive, we must focus on mission and the world outside the church."

— Glen Davis at the 127th General Assembly



The way the world is made

As long as there is poverty in the world, I can never be rich, even if I have a billion dollars. As long as diseases are rampant and millions of people in this world cannot expect to live more than 28 or 30 years, I can never be totally healthy, even if I just got a good checkup at the Mayo Clinic. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the way our world is made.

— Martin Luther King Jr.

Heard on a church answering machine

Good day, you have reached the office of Reverend _____.
If you wish to critique last Sunday's sermon, press 1.
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To criticize your children's Sunday school teacher or program, press 5.
To complain about the youth group, press 6.
To ask for money, press 7.
To report on the suspicious activities of someone else in the congregation, press 8.
To talk behind my back, press 9. Your call will be transferred to Mr. _____ who does an excellent job of conveying your message to all those who aren't concerned in a very short period of time.
If you wish to say a word of encouragement, hold the line. I'll be right with you.

— Margaret Brouillette

Problems of the "normal"

The problem of the "normal" world is fear. We have so much fear of one another; we are afraid of meeting.

— Jean Vanier

That which dominates our imagination and our thoughts will determine our life and character. Therefore it behooves us to be careful what we are worshipping, for what we are worshipping we are becoming.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Anti-intellectualism

Anti-intellectualism and the fullness of the Spirit are mutually incompatible, because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth.

— John Stott

"Teaching is my calling and where God wants me to be."

— Catherine Inglis at the 127th General Assembly

John Congram



Interpreting the signs

What signs from the recent 127th General Assembly deserve our attention and need our interpretation?

The pattern held true from every Assembly I have attended as editor of the *Record*. When asked what they would remember most from the Assembly, first-time commissioners inevitably answer in terms of the ecumenical visitors, the worship services or having the opportunity to meet and visit with Presbyterians from across Canada. Seldom, if ever, has anyone referred to an item we generally understand as Assembly business.

How should we interpret this sign? Given it is their first Assembly, conceivably there simply isn't time for them to understand and come to grips with the issues. Or, maybe, they do not consider those issues relevant or important. What we cannot afford to do is ignore what these commissioners are saying. In the 19th century, Cardinal Newman signalled an active role for the laity in discerning the Spirit when he wrote that church leaders must take seriously "a sort of instinct, or *phronēma*, deep in the mystical body of Christ."

Laypeople clearly point to a felt need for contact with other Presbyterians and for an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the witness and mission of the church. What they say may also be a sign that General Assembly in its present form is not the best place for those needs to be met.

When you stir into the mix the view expressed by old-timers that the amount of business at this Assembly should not legitimately take more than two days, what does it all say?

To some it might suggest less frequent Assemblies. However, the church has consistently rejected that idea.

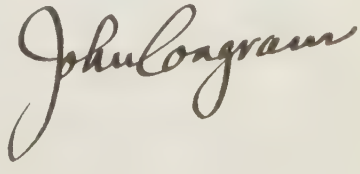
A possible solution might be Assemblies that alternate between one that concentrates on business and one that limits business to emergency matters, say for one day, with the rest of the time spent on education, mission and fellowship, much like a congress.

Someone remarked to me that she found a certain dissonance in spending hours debating the role of Presbyterians in Freemasonry while giving scant attention to the announcement that the life expectancy for females in Malawi has dropped to 36. Similarly, the report from the committee on statistical decline passed through Assembly without comment or debate. While 300 Presbyterians debated the pros and cons of being a Mason, The Presbyterian Church in Canada lost 300 more members from its rolls. Not a good sign, I would suggest.

A more hopeful sign occurred when a Young Adult Representative (YAR) rose to point out that two presbyteries had no commissioners present. In future, he suggested, YARs from those presbyteries should be commissioned to represent their presbyteries. This signalled that, given the opportunity, young people in our church stand willing to take responsibility for the life of the church. But the sign also begs the question: will they be given that opportunity? It also reminds us that YARs and their predecessors, Young Adult Observers, were never meant to become a permanent institution. They were stopgap measures until a way could be found for young people to have both a voice and a vote in the courts of the church.

Other good signs included a commissioner's overture addressing the kidnapping of a church leader in Columbia, showing we are capable of responding to an immediate crisis. During morning worship each day and as a part of the celebrative event launching the year of equipping the laity, laypeople spoke eloquently about how Christ had called them in their everyday lives.

More than the usual number of heroes touched this Assembly. Jack and Beth McIntosh, Pauline Brown and Chris Vais at the Knox alumnae luncheon provided a clear indication of the importance of heroes to nurture and inspire the community of faith. But they also signalled a need to discover effective ways of moving from simply admiring our heroes to emulating them. Possibly, during this year of equipping the laity, all of us, both clergy and laity, will discover their secrets. Perhaps, too, it was no accident that, a few hours before he died, Jack McIntosh, speaking from his wheelchair, would send us out with this phrase ringing in our ears, "Without the laity, there is no church."



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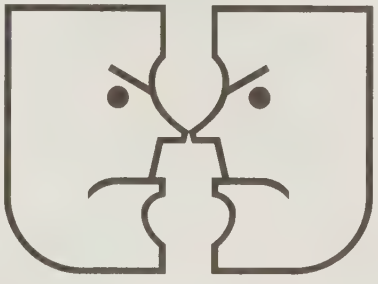
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our cover

The Moderator, Rev. Joe Reed, surrounded by friends in Canada and Central America. Colour photo: Wilma Welsh.

On target

I commend Kathy Cawsey for her article "The 95 factor" (May *Record*). It is excellent.

As a member of a burgeoning country church, I can say her suggestions are right on target as our congregation has implemented most of them. One I might add is to have a well-staffed nursery with interesting playthings and a short program for three- to four-year-old children.

We are truly blessed to have a young minister and his wife who have a heart for the Lord and real compassion and caring for the church family.

Helen Harrison,
Leaskdale, Ont.

Thanks for the series

Thanks for the *Record*! And thanks specifically for the series focusing on ministry with children, teens and young adults.

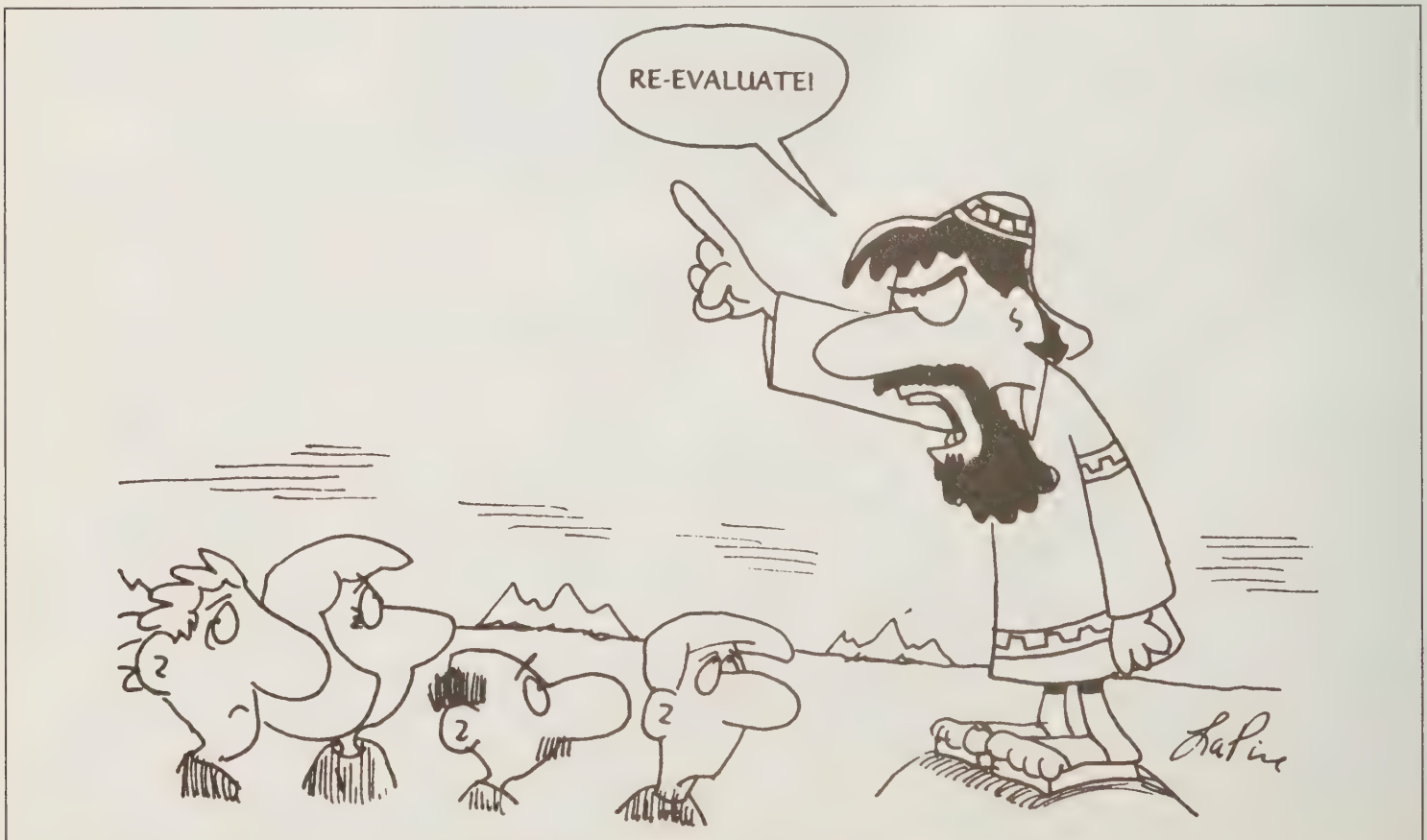
The inclusion of authors and youth ministry people like Mark Yaconelli, Mark DeVries, Dave Overholt and more was visionary, helpful, "right out front" of what is happening in youth and family ministries. It sure helps what I endeavour to do as a regional youth worker to have such information appear in our national Presbyterian magazine. I hope everyone in every congregation who receives the *Record* studied the articles.

Now I would like to see an article on peer ministry by Lyle Griner. Peer ministry is part of the family and youth program of Augsburg College in Minneapolis. It provides the skills youth need in their relationships on high school and university campuses, and as they teach Sunday school, counsel at camp, act as student youth leaders in their churches and communities, and serve as youth missionaries wherever God sends them.

Pat Allison,
Synod Youth Director,
Atlantic Provinces

At the close of the FLAMES initiative that focuses on children, teens and young adults, I commend the *Record* on the coverage of this important facet of ministry. I would also recommend that, as we enter the next phase of the FLAMES initiative, the *Record* still provide occasional articles to assist those of us actively involved with children and youth. With the emphasis on laity empowerment, the *Record* can encourage congregations in this important ministry.

We publish as many letters as possible. All are subject to editing for meaning and space, and must include the correspondent's name and full address. Letters are intended to provide for the wide expression of views among our readers. Publication does not imply endorsement by either the *Record* or The Presbyterian Church in Canada.



John the Baptist's brother — Joe the Presbyterian

In talking to individuals who have been connected with the church since their childhood, I have found a common bond: there were adults who reached out to them and made them feel loved in their Christian community.

There is the need for laity to continue this ministry. Such articles can strengthen their skills.

Julia E. Apps-Douglas,
Hagersville, Ont.

Listening to the church

In the Moderator's May column, he mentions *The Westminster Confession of Faith* but declines to quote from it. Section XXXI.V states: "Synods and councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical, and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary; or by way of advice for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate." This, not from 19th-century "pietists" but from 17th-century world-shaping Puritans!

Notwithstanding the secular bias of our age, it seems to me contemporary church leaders *are* heeded when they have something to say. Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Pope are obvious examples of church leaders who speak to current political realities in distinctively Christian ways and get a hearing. But when church leaders engage in vaguely leftist political me-too-ism, they get the response they deserve: a big yawn.

Barry Mack,
St. Lambert, Que.

Education about religion

The deputy clerk of Assembly stated in his April column (You were asking?) that he "[does] not know what the [educational] situation is in Ontario." It should be stated that education is a provincial, not federal, matter. Educationalists living in British Columbia serve under different regulations from those in Ontario. Thus, General Assembly staff have traditionally relegated educational concerns to lower church courts in the provinces.

For the past quarter-century, Presbyterian synods in Ontario have jointly appointed a standing committee: The Inter-Synod Committee on Public and Private Education in the Province of Ontario. They also annually select official representatives for the Ecumenical Study Commission on Education in Ontario (ESC). The latter is an interdenominational body comprising all major denominations in Ontario.

Both committees unequivocally support "Education about Religion" in the public schools of the province. Over the years, every successive minister of education has met with the ESC to discuss this church-supported position, with the sole exception of the current provincial government. It is the view of the churches that virtually every aspect of education (such as history, literature, ethics) cannot be understood without examining the role of religion. Presbyterian synods in Ontario have clearly stated that discrete and/or integrated instruction in education about religion is basic to excellence in teaching and learning. Our church courts are on record as supporting one publicly funded educational system in which education about religion is integral to the curriculum. For further information, contact Dr. John A. Johnston, chair, ESC, 183 Chedoke Ave., Hamilton, Ont. L8P 4P2; fax 905-526-8697; drjohna.johnston@sympatico.ca.

John A. Johnston,
Hamilton, Ont.

An average young person

I am looking at the cover of the March 2001 *Record* and shaking my head after reading the scathing letter by Dave Ball in the May issue. How anyone could interpret the photo as "selling sex" is beyond my understanding.

In the picture, I see a healthy, young female teen wearing normal comfortable summer clothing. I imagine she is admiring the beauty of God's creation. And I imagine the setting is a peaceful sanctuary for her.

I think the picture is a beautiful study of an average young person, more of whom should be made to feel welcome by the church.

Jean Mills,
Tara, Ont.

Over the years,

we've helped him with every imaginable problem — when he lost his housing, when his daughter ran away and he couldn't find her, when he felt like giving up. We've encouraged him and prayed with him. When we asked for volunteers to help serve sandwiches, he was one of the first to come forward. Now, he gives us two mornings a week, helping to prepare food and serve it to the many people who turn to us for meals each day.

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Worshipping in Rome

I enjoyed Harry McGee's article (May *Record*) on his visit to the Church of Scotland in Rome.

Some years ago, I was with a parliamentary delegation visiting Italy during the Easter season. With other delegates, I was received by Pope John Paul II at the Vatican and invited to Easter Mass the next day.

Despite my great respect for the Pope, I did not go to Easter Mass with the multitudes, but went to a small, lovely service at the modest St. Andrew's Church near the Trevi fountain. We had an inspiring sermon from a Highland Scot and came back thankful for the small church in the vast city.

Heath Macquarrie,
Ottawa

When in Rome or ...

Your readers may be interested in knowing that the Presbytery of Europe of the Church of Scotland has congregations in several European cities, including Amsterdam and Budapest. My husband and I have had the privilege of attending services on the Costa del Sol in Fuengirola, Spain (near Malaga), many times over the past 16 years. The congregation was established in 1964 to serve the many Scots who have retired to the south of Spain.

The services are held at the Lux Mundi Ecumenical Centre every Sunday morning at 10:30 with attendance reaching over 100 at times. The minister, John Page, divides his week between the Costa del Sol and another congregation in Gibraltar that meets on Sunday evenings. The church activities now include a Sunday school, choir, Bible study and monthly meetings of the Ladies of the Kirk.

We found the fellowship to be warm and welcoming, especially at the coffee hour on the boulevard in the sun after each service. It was wonderful to find this spiritual oasis in the middle of a holiday environment.

Dorothy A. Van Lunen,
Dartmouth, N.S.

Visitor follow-up

Ms. Khaja's letter (March *Record*) illustrates the problem of deciding the best way to approach visitors to a church. The follow-up approach she wants would have overwhelmed me. Not to mention that everyone's home is not always ready for an unannounced visit from the minister.

In our church, the minister begins the service by greeting visitors and inviting them to join us for the after-service coffee. He also points out the "I Would Like" papers in every pew. If visitors take no action, no one pursues them; they are allowed to proceed at their own pace. This worked for me. I progressed from visitor, to supporter, to member within a year.

I hope Ms. Khaja's search will lead her to another of our congregations where her needs will be met.

For more information on the "I Would Like" forms, e-mail Rev. Alex Mitchell: sttimothys@on.aibn.com.

James A. Douglas,
Ottawa

Sanctions

The article "Sanctions: a price too high?" (April *Record*) was thought-provoking. But it necessarily leads to further questions. Is it logical to assume that any individual — be this Saddam Hussein, Stalin or Hitler — could do harm on such a massive scale as has been observed time and again without the support of a large number of compliant "accomplices"?

A recent example was in Austria, where a politician (Jörg Haider) was opposed from almost every corner of the "democratic," industrialized society. Yet, he was democratically elected! Should this not cause us to ask: how can evil tendencies be so readily supported by a significant portion of the populace? Which sequence of events caused such a twist in public opinion? And how far do those events go back which, obviously, have never been resolved and have now come to a boil again (as in Kosovo, Somalia, Palestine/Israel — the list is endless). And, before we come to a smug conclusion, let's think about our treatment of native peoples, Japanese-Canadians, the Doukhobors ...

Dieter S. Leidel,
Barrie, Ont.

Children and worship

Children in worship is never the issue. It is the mystifying act of parents who sit at the front knowing they will be exiting and re-entering past many rows of worshippers two or three times during the short period of 60 minutes. By sitting at the back, they could pop in and out discreetly *ad infinitum*. Discrimination? Intolerance? No! Common sense courtesy. The same would apply to me if I had a hacking cough, perfume allergies or flatulence.

It is a mistake and ineffective to put this issue under the umbrella of *all* children because we are too "Christian" to address specific parents. For those who do not understand the concept of give and take, we must gently lead — with love.

Yes, invest in youth with a vengeance. Better still, let us be role models and put this negative, inflammatory subject to rest. Surely, as church bodies, we could divert and expend this much energy and attention to the unseen children (and adults) who cry because they are hungry for food and love.

Ann Riddell,
Oshawa

Was Paul there?

There is a passage in Joseph McLelland's article ("On going gentle," April *Record*) that I believe is somewhat misleading. It reads: "The Apostles are authoritative for us as the original *witnesses*, seeing for themselves the life and times of Jesus of Nazareth. As Kierkegaard once remarked, Paul is credible not because he was a genius but because he was there."

The problem is there is no biblical or historical evidence to suggest Paul and Jesus ever met during the latter's life on earth. Therefore, Paul, unlike the other Apostles, cannot be said to have been there during the time Jesus spent travelling and teaching prior to his crucifixion. In fact, Paul's first recorded encounter with Jesus was the spiritual one, which occurred several years later during the famous incident on the road to Damascus.

Glen Sinclair,
Scarborough, Ont.

Joe Reed



Keeping hope alive

Like expectant children, Christians joyfully anticipate new beginnings

We pressed our noses flat against the frosty window — a Grade 8 algebra class that no teacher in the world could call back to order. The little brown Presbyterian church on Melville Avenue in the Westmount area of Montreal dominated the park where we watched the first snowflakes of the season begin to fall. The grey November skies held a bite and a promise: wintry images of hockey, snowballs and Christmas suddenly filled our minds.

Years later, I saw the same excitement in a different scene. It was a Sahara oasis on the first day of the short rainy season. Children danced in the muddy streets, their faces turned upward to let the water wash over them.

Another image: 40 young mothers, some still in their teens, live in and around a Central American dump filled with stench and flies and desperation. They have gathered to hear one of our mission staff talk about chickens, eggs and new beginnings. Despite the fact they have been lied to by a series of governments of both the right and the left, hope and excitement fill the room. Like the expectant children, they joyfully anticipate new beginnings.

This year's FLAMES focus reminds us that it is the laity who bring that special gift of excitement and expectation to the church. A founder of one of Presbyterian World Service and Development's partners in Nicaragua — a Mennonite, whose ministry focuses on working children, women and hurricane victims — recalls that the biggest barrier to beginning the new ministry was the clergy. "They thought we wanted to steal their sheep, but all we wanted was to bring hope to people long denied it."

The Caribbean-Central American witness of our church with which I am most familiar reflects this lay presence. Of the seven staff members (Ken Kim, Jim Patterson, David Villalonga, Denise Van Wissen, Fernando Cascante, Chris Jorna and myself), four are clergy and three are laypeople. This is also true, to different degrees, in other mission fields.

This year's FLAMES focus reminds us that it is the laity who bring that special gift of excitement and expectation to the church

We do not know what the future holds for us or for our church. Life has beaten many of us into resignation and even exhaustion. Do we still dare to believe in God's promises for us all? Do we still dare to press our noses against the window-pane, dance in the rain or turn out to yet another meeting? As a gospel people, we must keep alive that spirit of excitement and hope, living in the expectation of new and great things.

Joe Reed

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R. Sheldon MacKenzie



When less is more

You do not need to be ordained to be a minister

Many years ago, at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, when the place seemed idyllic in so many ways, there was an older student who took time to be a friend to everyone. Many of us, more than I could count, were grateful for his helpful friendship and hospitality. Many of his friends were members of the men's and women's sports teams — he rarely missed a game as an enthusiastic supporter. And when he went to the student union coffee shop, he was always surrounded by other students.

John MacGregor was a splendid person. He was older and wiser than we were, and his cautious guidance and words of encouragement were particularly welcome during times of student stress. In addition to his interest in other people, his grades were better than average. He was taking an arts degree in preparation for the study of theology — he intended to become a Baptist minister. One summer, he was a student missioner in a little village outside Wolfville. From that little village as a centre, he had three other small places for which he was responsible.

That autumn, when he came back to the campus, he told us of his summer experiences — some of which, in hindsight, were humorous though many more were serious. There is nothing unusual in that. This sort of situation often brings challenges that students have never met before. (As a result of these summertime mission field experiences, many young people questioned their vocation and not a few decided against the ministry.)

John's main problem was finding time to prepare Sunday worship services. During the week, he kept himself too busy in the several communities to have time to read, research and prepare his sermons. He had good books, certainly; he simply didn't have time to read them!

He had one carefully prepared sermon based on verse 4 in Psalm 8:

"What is man,
that thou art mindful of him?
and the son of man,
that thou visitest him?"

The sermon went well. His people were most appreciative.

The verse in Psalm 8, he rationalized, is both simple and profound

Several weeks later, short of time, he took the first part of the verse and expanded on it:

"What is man,
that thou art mindful of him?"

And still later in the summer, his text was reduced to:

"What is man?"

At this point, his training in philosophy stood him in good stead. In late August, he preached on the first two words of the verse:

"What IS?"

And for his finale, he preached on:

"What?"

In that sermon, he challenged his listeners to answer the question in terms of the things and people that most challenged their understanding of God. To answer it in terms of the soul-destroying incidents and conditions in the lives of devout Christians and of good non-Christian people as well. Then, too, he asked them to answer the question in terms of the people by whom they were most sustained, who allowed them to grow spiritually. What was it such people had said or done that made all the difference?

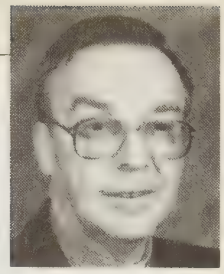
The verse in Psalm 8, he rationalized, is both simple and profound. As is much of Scripture. He developed this text into a fine sermon on ultimate things — the things that really matter with respect to the Christian faith. When shorn of all the ideas and interpretations of self-serving things that people have read *into* the texts, not necessarily *out* of the texts, the history of salvation may be summed up in words that are brief and simple. Maybe in the words of the Apostles' Creed. Even more concise than the creed are the words of St. Paul: "Jesus Christ is Lord."

John MacGregor both believed and lived that four-word creed. In the end, he didn't continue his studies for the ministry. He became a splendid high school teacher whose Christian life, example and encouragement transformed the lives of many young people in his classes.

The last time I visited him, he was in a nursing home in Antigonish, gradually slipping away in some sadness and disappointment. He died there a few years ago. But those of us who knew him and loved him will not soon forget him. He was much too Christ-like for that. R

R. Sheldon MacKenzie, who lives in New Glasgow, N.S., is a retired professor from Memorial University in St. John's and a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Ted Siverns



A psalm for summer savouring

A time for Canadians to reflect on nature and, sometimes, stop to thank Someone for it

Psalm 104

On a glorious spring morning in the south of France, the novelist and professed atheist Katherine Mansfield arose, looked out her window at the beauty of it all and said, "How I wish there were someone to thank!"

In Psalm 104, the psalmist names that "someone" and enters into sustained praise of God the Creator. There is no tension in this psalm over the difficulties and ambiguities of life; it simply speaks continuous joy at the wonders of creation and delight in the Creator of it all.

In its appreciation of nature, Psalm 104 is something of a rarity in biblical literature. There are few examples in either prose or poetry of a reflection on and fascination with nature.

Not surprisingly, the psalm reflects the world-view, the cosmology and theological imagery of an earlier day. It also has several verses that have interesting parallels with the hymn of praise to Aton, the Egyptian sun god. Indeed, the psalm reflects its time except for its clear focus on the saving and sustaining God experienced by Israel.

Psalm 104 appears to be purposely twinned with Psalm 103. Both psalms begin and end with the words "Bless the LORD, O my soul." While Psalm 103 praises God as the source of a well-lived life, Psalm 104 praises God as Creator and still upholder of the wonders of the universe.

Typical of the Psalms and indeed of the Bible, the whole of theology is not contained in this one psalm. It speaks an important truth but not the whole truth. There is no reflection on the needs of widows



and orphans, no rehearsal of the history of Israel. There is little concern about the power of evil. The psalm simply emphasizes the joys of creation. It is a psalm for summer savouring when Canadians take the time to reflect on nature and, sometimes, stop to thank Someone for it.

The psalm begins with a call to praise, followed by poetic descriptions of God "wrapped in light as with a garment." The first four verses include wonderful poetic language that imagines God carried by clouds like chariots and riding on the "wings of the wind." God's lyrical attendants include the winds as messengers, and fire and flame as ministers.

Verses 5-9 speak of creation as understood by this long-ago poet. Verses 10-13 portray the created marvel of water: springs from the ground, rain from the sky. In verses 14-15, food is created: vegetables, wine and bread. Trees, mountains, birds, animals, moon and sun are next recognized as from God (verses 16-23). In summary, the world is "awesome."

Verse 24 begins a new phase of praise as the many and wise wonders of creation are recounted: life in the sea, animals of all kinds, ships on the waters (the Mediterranean) and even the mythical Leviathan, a plaything for God (cf., Job 41:1-34). All of life is a gift from and sustained by God.

A concluding prayer begins at verse 31 and, in verse 33, the psalmist vows to sing forever the praise of God. The psalmist then prays that his musing may be acceptable to God. The psalmist will rejoice in the Maker of all even as earlier he had called upon the Maker to rejoice in the Maker's creation (verse 31b).

Verse 35 jars the scenario painted thus far. The psalmist does not say, as we might, "Let sin and suffering cease." Rather, he shouts, "Let sinners cease." We tend to be abstract, but this is an example of Hebrew concrete thinking. Evil is not so much a something out there but a specific something that can be identified and named. In the words of Arthur Weiser: "It is the wicked who by their rejection of and rebellion against God stifle the thanksgiving which is due to him and thus dim the glory of the divine creation."

The last word in the psalm is "hallelujah," a term now used in English but relatively rare in Hebrew. "Hallelujah" means "Praise God." The attitude of gratitude, the exercise of praise, lifts the spirit and makes life taste better. The German Lutheran, 17th-century hymn-writer Paul Gerhardt summed up the meaning of the psalm in his hymn "Go out my heart and search for joy!" R

For discussion and reflection

- In your group or by yourself, write a litany that begins each line with "We praise you God for ... " Conclude each line with "Lord, accept our praise."
- A wonderful poem by Evelyn Underhill begins each verse with "I come in the little things, / Saith the Lord." What are the "little things" mentioned by the psalmist? What would you add to the list?
- Compare Psalm 104 with hymn paraphrases such as "O worship the King," "All things I see,""Bless the Lord, my soul and being!"

L. E. (Ted) Siverns is the minister of First Church in New Westminster, B.C.

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pastoral epistles from peter plymley II

My dear editor:

Of course I write this before I have had a chance to read the *Record*'s retelling of the saga of the 127th General Assembly, but I suspect the alarm bells were sounding in the corridors of power long before that. I refer to the fact that according to the long form of the census conducted by Statistics Canada — the form asking for religious affiliation — Presbyterians no longer exist!

The majority of Canadians received the short form and may be ignorant of our demise. Or, if they have heard the bad news, they may think we have simply sunk below the statisticians' Mendoza line (something for the fans) and can no longer muster enough members to be a major player or even graphically significant. Not so! There are denominations and other religions listed that are numerically smaller than The Presbyterian Church in Canada!

Are we faced with a conspiracy? The truth is out there.

Could there be political machinations behind this act of ecclesial shunning? Let me see … Sir John A. Macdonald was a Presbyterian who described himself as a "pillar of the church … but an outside pillar." He was our first prime minister and a Conservative. Mackenzie King was a Presbyterian — albeit with some unusual sidelines — and a Liberal. And, at least so far, the longest-serving prime minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, had a Presbyterian grandmother … No, there's not much to go on there.

Maybe we are not looking at a malevolent, behind-the-scenes plot at all. Maybe someone up there (Ottawa, not heaven, though the two are interchangeable for some) likes us!

Consider.

Being left off the census forms has advantages for Presbyterians

We are now flying below the radar. We no longer have to play the game of "as guilty as thou," apologizing when we don't have to as we did in conjunction with the bigger, StatsCan-tracked churches that acknowledged ill-treatment of aboriginal peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador. (We actually didn't have *any* work among said peoples, but didn't want to be left out.)

Think of the great relief of being omitted from all denominational profiles in the media that shed crocodile tears over "The Decline of the Church!" How much easier it will be to contemplate our future. If, officially, we don't exist, we are starting from zero. In no time at all, we will be the fastest growing church in Canada. Of course, we will have to put a "Top Secret" restriction on the publication of our *own* statistics, but they haven't done much for us lately anyway.

Not existing officially has a certain glamour. We can play up to the secretiveness of not really being here by taking down all of our church signboards and embracing mystery.

"What is that church-like building?"

"I don't really know … They say people go there by invitation only. Hard to get in. Porridge has something to do with their rituals. Sometimes you can hear awful sounds coming from inside. Word is that they're bagpipes, but not everyone believes that. Probably have a secret handshake."

Our church offices in Toronto could not only take down the sign but install dark-tinted windows — very dark-tinted windows. Anonymous black automobiles with the same sort of glass could be leased for the staff. Mirrored sunglasses could be issued, and little hearing aid-like devices with a wire running down under the collar would be a nice touch.

This magazine could take on a new look. Dropping the "Presbyterian" and going to a plain, dark blue cover with only the words "THE RECORD" in a small, discreet type-face centred in the middle would provide the right sort of aura. There would be no table of contents, simply a page bearing a stern warning: "For P**********n Eyes Only!" You would not have to solicit subscriptions: individuals would apply for the right to receive it. It might be too expensive to print on treated paper that would self-destruct in 10 days, but it would be worth a shot.

Some identifying symbol for the "membership," worn on a ring, lapel pin but, probably, not as a tattoo, would be in order. I see no need to drop the burning bush. It would be better, however, to change the motto from "*nec tamen consumebatur*" to "*non nova sed nove*" — "not new things but a new way."

Yours opportunistically,

Peter Plymley II



The FLEXI

Opening worship

The opening worship for the 127th General Assembly was held, not in the vaulted sanctuary of a historical church building steeped in tradition, but in a gymnasium steeped in … well, we won't go into that here. In fact, the main gym of the Tait McKenzie building of York University in suburban Toronto (or what used to be suburban Toronto) would also be the site for all the sederunts that would follow.



Children and youth from 36 congregations presented banners at the opening of the Assembly, celebrating the past year that focused on children, teens and young adults.

Instead of stained glass, there were small rectangular windows just below the ceiling. Instead of the majestic rise of organ pipes, there were retractable basketball nets. Instead of memorial plaques reminding the congregation of the past, there were signs reminding them not to smoke.

But there was an organ (as well as other instruments) and a choir. And there certainly was a congregation, as the diligent last-minute search for empty seats attested. So, perhaps, it should come as no surprise that it was only a matter of minutes before a thousand Presbyterians transformed a sterile gym into a sanctuary from the cold outdoors, filled with the warmth of the Spirit.

The worship service bulletin promised a blend of the traditional and the contemporary. In the end, it seemed the contemporary tipped the scales — particularly the musical scales. The hymns, the introits, the anthem — all appeared to have been chosen to ensure no toes would be left untapping. And what would a Presbyterian General Assembly worship service be without clapping. A credible rendition by the choir of Glenview Church, Toronto, and members of the Mississauga Choral Society of the African hymn *Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'* provided the congregation with the perfect opportunity. As for the non-musical parts of the service, even the Lord's Prayer was a modern translation.

The bulletin also pointed out that many youth from across the church community were present to help celebrate the conclusion of the FLAMES initiative year of "Focus on Children, Teens and Young Adults." Indeed, their presence could be felt

BLE Assembly

by Tom Dickey

throughout the service, from the dramatic call to worship courtesy of the drama team from St. Andrew's Church, Molesworth, and Knox Church, Gorrie, Ontario, to the presentation and dedication of banners made by youth across the country. The banners, once they were hung along the walls, completed the gym's metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly.

There was a brief moment early in the service when participants might have thought they were about to suffer the slings and arrows or, at least, the buzz and feedback of an outrageous sound system. A member of the congregation arose from his seat and began to say something unintelligible (to one observer, anyway) into a microphone. It turned out he was speaking Hungarian. That scene was repeated in seven other languages by seven other members of the congregation scattered throughout the gym. It was an effective way of bringing the many branches of the Presbyterian Church together within the folds of a common celebration. And the sound system was excellent.

In his sermon, outgoing Moderator Glen Davis continued the personal tone he set for himself throughout last year's Assembly. In a poignant and powerful message entitled "Why Don't You Rip Open the Heavens and Come Down," Davis talked of laments — those gut-wrenching cries from the heart that arise out of a terrible sense of being abandoned by God. He recalled a General Assembly 14 years ago when, as the opening service was about to begin, he was told by a friend to call his brother in New Brunswick. He did, and heard "the worst news of my life." His brother's 21-year-old son had been killed in a motorcycle accident. And this, only a year after his brother's wife had died from cancer. If ever there was a time for lamenting, that was surely it.

"There is a lot of lament in the Bible," Davis pointed out. "There is a whole book called Lamentations." But what about today's laments? They are there, he says. He has heard them throughout his year as Moderator: "O Lord, where are the young people?" "Lord, why do the same few people do all the work in our church?" "O God, you promised once the mighty would be brought down. Where is your good news for the poor?"

But what follows lament? To be open to the "re-entry of divine grace, forgiveness and healing," we must confess and repent from our own role in life's transgressions. We must admit to the stumbling blocks we have often placed in the way of young people. We must help laypeople to discern their gifts and provide opportunities to use them.

We must, said Davis, be very careful when we ask God to rip open the heavens and come down. God has demonstrated that he takes our laments and our confessions and our prayers seriously. When he does, we will receive power from the Holy Spirit and will be sent out to be witnesses in Toronto, in Thunder Bay, to the East Coast and to the West Coast and in the uttermost parts of the world.

When the service was over, it was clear the congregation had found it a moving experience. "Two thumbs up," according to a group of twenty- to thirtysomethings in the back bleachers.

Following a brief intermission, the business of the first sederunt took over. In his remarks after his

"Help us to listen and not do all the talking."

— Brenna Pladsen, age 9, praying during opening worship



installation as Moderator of the 127th General Assembly, Joe Reed described himself as a "reluctant Moderator." By nature introverted and shy, he was shocked when he learned of his nomination. But, he said, he is also something else — a Presbyterian. He loves the church and he takes it seriously. In shy-person fashion, he thanked all those who have helped him on his faith journey, the members of the church staff who have supported him in his work, and the people he has met in Central America who have taught him much about unshakable faith and determination.

The remainder of the first sederunt proceeded without a glitch, except for the 9:30 p.m. adjournment, but it did say "approximately."

"I bring my warmest greeting. I underline warmest. It has been cold up in those rooms [at York University]."

— Rev. Rodney Curpanen, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Mauritius

MONDAY

Yo, Yoepersons

York University's male sports teams are known as the Yoemen. The female teams suffer under the clever name of, you guessed it, the Yoewomen. Both names could serve as inspiration for the briefing sessions for, traditionally, they require a yoeperson-like effort on the part of both the "briefees" and the "briefers."

This year, there were "XII" (and you thought we had done away with Latin terms) different briefing groups available, covering the whole spectrum of the denomination's work. Many of the groups were standing room only, but the size of the classrooms where they were held may have had something to do with it. Some groups were, predictably, well-attended, such as the one that combined Presbyterian World Service and Development, International Ministries and Justice Ministries, or one that included Canada Ministries and the Journey to Wholeness. Another room filled to standing room only featured the work of the Special Committee Re Sexual Orientation; but the committee's co-session-holder, the *Presbyterian Record*, no doubt played an equal part in drawing commissioners.

All the briefing sessions, large or small, rated high marks for the earnestness of those representing the various agencies and committees, and the sincerity of those asking the questions.



Ecumenical Visitors

- Rev. Dr. Richard Crossman, principal-dean of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary
- Rev. Rodney Curpanen, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Mauritius
- Rev. Chung Sik Park, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Korea
- Rev. Duk Hwa Kim, Moderator of the Korean Christian Church in Japan
- Rev. Howard M. Nkhoma, General Secretary, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Livingstonia Synod
- Gautoni Doctor Kainja, a legal practitioner and regulatory specialist with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod
- A delegation from the upcoming Roman Catholic World Youth Day 2002 event

TUESDAY

Déjà vu all over again

Do you remember those old horror movies that would end with "The End," followed by a big question mark? Veteran commissioners may have thought they were sitting through one when issues from past years returned to haunt the 127th General Assembly. That is not to say the issues themselves are horrors. But so much valuable time has been spent and, apparently, will continue to be spent discussing them. In the words of the great Yogi Berra, "It was *déjà vu* all over again."

Early in the second sederunt on Tuesday morning, the new Moderator, in response to a question from a commissioner, replied, "We're flexible." As the week progressed, flexibility became part of Joe Reed's *modus operandi*, along with a gentle voice and a calm, soothing demeanour. If anything, Assembly may have, at times, been too flexible, as debate expanded to near breaking-point. Of course (to stretch the metaphor a little bit further), it is this same elasticity, this accommodating of debate from all sides of a question, that helps General Assemblies work as well as they do.



A few overtures

The first hint of debate at this year's Assembly occurred during the report of the Committee on Bills and Overtures. The committee had 27 recommendations in total. Matters were proceeding decently and quickly when that old bugaboo, sexual orientation, came up. After some deliberation, a recommendation that would have imposed a time constraint on the Special Committee Re Sexual Orientation by having it report to next year's General Assembly was defeated.

One of the more unusual overtures called for the formation of a special committee at this Assembly to look at the horrific possibility that movies may be made concerning the life and crimes of Paul Bernardo and Karla Homolka. Perhaps, one of the least likely to succeed overtures was one calling for large shopping malls to be closed on Sundays (at least you'd be able to find a parking spot).

Some parting observations

Before introducing the outgoing Moderator, Joe Reed reminded the commissioners that coffee and snacks were available in the display area (set up in an adjacent field house). Having witnessed his share of Assemblies, Glen Davis thanked the Moderator for informing the commissioners of that fact just before he was about to speak.

In his address, Davis offered five observations from his experience as Moderator. The first was that the church is too often focused on congregational survival. Churches need to look outward, not inward, he said. "Save yourselves and be lost."

Another concern Davis has is the despair and mystification felt by rural and remote congregations who often have a difficult time attracting a minister. We must not forget these congregations, he said. We must encourage ministers to answer their calls.

Then, the former Moderator shared the good news. During the past year, he was "thrilled" to meet with children and youth, and their leaders who work tirelessly in the background. Those leaders deserve a medal, he said. He also wanted to share the discovery that good things come in youthful packages. Young people are gifted. Let's help them share their gifts with the church, he said.

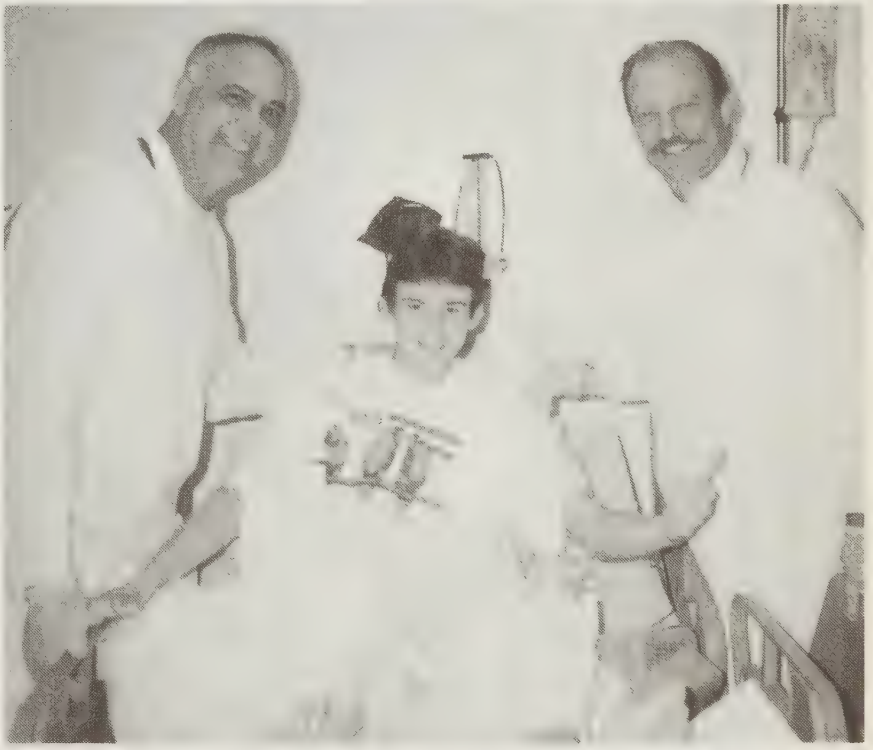
Lest the Assembly become too cocky at this point, Davis closed his address with a reminder that the church is called to be a conscience to the state. There is an "attitude of timidity" within our church, he said. Referring to the story of David and Nathan, Davis said the church must have the courage of Nathan and speak out against policies that are against the basic tenets of God's Kingdom.

"People who love, work with and give their lives for children deserve medals."

— Glen Davis

An *un*lucky talisman

The multitude, and magnitude, of issues to which the Committee on International Affairs must speak by nature necessitates a long and extensive report. This year's report was no exception. It dealt with, among other things: Hungarian Reformed churches and schools as agents of peace in the sub-Carpathian Ukraine, four recommendations (all approved by Assembly) aimed at strengthening our ties with the church and the people of Nigeria, building a peaceful and just society in Guatemala, and aiding children caught in armed conflicts.



Joe Reed took time off from his duties as Moderator to visit Tom Ward, a Rotary exchange student from Australia, who was badly burned while visiting Canada. On the left is Bob Fourney, minister of Glenview Church, the host church.

To describe the blatant abuse of human rights in Sudan as a hot issue is, perhaps, to do it a disservice; but, certainly, it is an issue that Presbyterians, Canadians and people around the world have heard much about lately. Presbyterians who hold shares in Talisman Energy of Calgary were invited to write to the oil company's CEO, calling for a halt in the payment of oil revenues to a government



involved in military repression and for the suspension of Talisman's operations in Sudan until a just peace is achieved. The Presbyterian Church will retain a minimum number of shares in Talisman so that it may continue to act with other churches in pressuring the corporation to get out of Sudan.

A letter from the Moderator will be sent to the federal minister of Immigration calling on Canada to increase the number of people sponsored as refugees from Sudan "in light of human rights violations being perpetrated on the peoples of that country." Presbyterians are also asked to consider private sponsorship of Sudanese refugees.

"To serve the people was my motto."
— *Jack McIntosh*

You say tomato: I say tomahto

What would a General Assembly be without a standing count. This year's first arose over a request by the Synod of Manitoba to allow it to meet biennially instead of annually. After the clerks of Assembly had what the new Moderator referred to as their "exercise" (walking around the Assembly hall counting votes), the amendment was declared defeated.



The Moderator of the Korean Christian Church in Japan, Rev. Duk Hwa Kim, makes a presentation to Beth and Jack McIntosh for their 40 years of service to Koreans in Japan.

A move to have the word "sederunt" changed to "session" was also defeated — without the need of a standing count. (Actually, after you sit through a few "sederunts," the word takes on an onomatopoeic effect.)

There was also some discussion over the difference between the words "salary" and "stipend." The Assembly reaffirmed the meaning and use of the word stipend as "an allowance provided for freedom to serve."

The bucks stay here

One of the more time-consuming matters to come out of the afternoon's discussion of the Life and Mission Agency report was an overture concerning the transfer of manses to congregations once they become self-supporting. The overture would have allowed congregations to acquire the manse by taking over the existing mortgage on the purchase price of the manse. Current policy dictates that, when a congregation becomes self-supporting, it can purchase the manse for the price Canada Ministries paid for it, less a grant of 25 per cent of the cost. The Life and Mission Agency pointed out that granting the prayer of the overture "would remove a process that has been in use for at least 30 years and replace it with a process that would add an element of unfairness." The overture was defeated.

Celebrations of lives and laity

Tuesday evening began with a minute of appreciation for Jack and Beth McIntosh who recently retired from a mission to which they had devoted a major part of their lives. No one could possibly think Jack and Beth's 40 years of service with the Korean Christian Church in Japan could be appreciated within a minute. What followed was a warm and moving tribute that left few eyes dry.

When a vote on the adoption of the minute was called for, the commissioners replied with a prolonged standing ovation. It was clear the Jack McIntosh they were remembering was not the one they saw before them, his body confined to a wheelchair, his oxygen supply hissing steadily in the background while he addressed the Assembly, his mind occasionally losing its train of thought. The man they were remembering was the one who fought steadfastly and courageously against the injustices suffered by Koreans in Japan. It was the Jack McIntosh who was unable to leave Japan for 11 years because of his refusal to be fingerprinted, but who had left his fingerprints indelibly on the



hearts and minds of all those who knew him.

When Thursday's sederunts began, the Assembly was told that Jack McIntosh had died at 4:15 that morning. A palpable sorrow fell over the hall.

What was in that punch!

The rest of Tuesday evening was given over to a celebration introducing this year's FLAMES initiative, "Equipping the Laity." Maybe it was a way of relieving stress, maybe it was a reaction to the we-can-even-make-Presbyterians-get-off-their … chairs bluegrass/gospel music of The Followers. Whatever the reason, the Assembly Hall was soon filled with the sight of Presbyterians batting balloons with wild abandon and eating red licorice. It was not necessarily a pretty sight, but it was a joyous one.

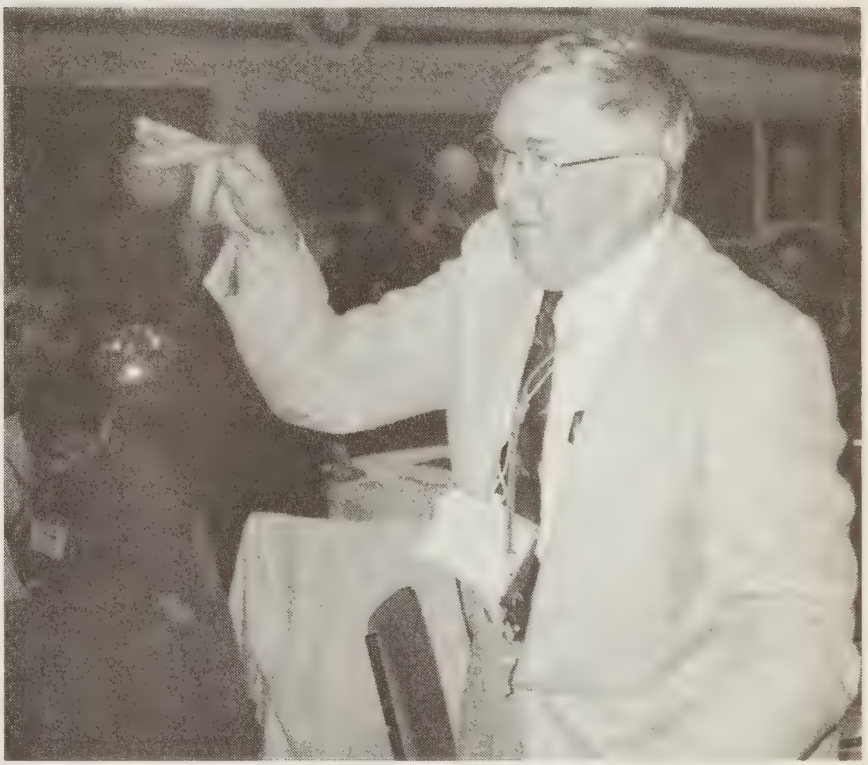
WEDNESDAY

Cementing the Mason issue (?)

Wednesday morning's sederunt began with two Young Adult Representatives (YARs) rising to register their disappointment that no commissioners from their presbyteries had chosen to attend Assembly. One of the YARs suggested they be given the privilege of voting in the commissioners' place (something that couldn't, unfortunately, be done). It was only one example of the refreshing contribution the YARs made to the discussions throughout the week. Maybe it's the innocence of youth, but they have a way of cutting to the heart of issues, complexities be damned.

If commissioners began their Wednesday daydreaming of the free evening ahead, an old familiar issue — Freemasonry and the church — soon put an end to their reveries. The Church Doctrine Committee, in response to a 1998 overture, presented guidelines for determining if involvement in Freemasonry is compatible with the beliefs of the Presbyterian Church. The report cautions any ministers, diaconal ministers or elders who are Freemasons about four areas: belief in deism, or the view that knowledge of God comes through reason rather than revelation; compromising witness to the Lordship of Christ; use of the Bible as the church's rule of faith and life, divorced from its reading within the Christian community; influencing the Christian community through a secret brotherhood. Should these be a part of their beliefs, the report urges them to "hear their call to Christ's invitation to singular commitment to Christ's reign in their lives and in the church."

If it was, as one commissioner referred to it, a "wussy" report, the Freemasons present certainly didn't think so. The debate that followed was long and, at times, acrimonious. Back and forth it went for a good hour (if you can call 60 minutes of discord good). When the Church Doctrine Committee's recommendation was finally adopted, one commissioner who was a Freemason threatened to withdraw because he felt his integrity had been called into question. He was persuaded, instead, to register his dissent.



Elder Sterling MacRae helps launch the year of "Equipping the Laity."

Yikes!

When it was time for the Committee on History report on Wednesday afternoon, the committee's convener, Peter Bush, pointed out that Joe Reed was the third active missionary to become Moderator, joining the illustrious company of George Leslie Mackay (1894) and John Buchanan (1928). When the new Moderator was asked how that made him feel, he replied, "It scares the jeepers out of me." He paused, then added, "Two-thirds of us are dead." [Actually, there was one other missionary Moderator. They forgot Murdoch Mackenzie (1913).]

"I am astounded, amazed and in awe of the gifts of young people. For heaven's sake, give them opportunities to use their gifts."

— Glen Davis



Take a deep breath and say OM

Another recognizable Assembly face popped up during the report of the Life and Mission Agency. After some discussion, Life and Mission, in consultation with the Committee on Theological Education and the theological colleges, was asked to take another look at instituting an ordained missionary system and then report back to the 128th General Assembly.

"In my church, I fear the women's group more than the Freemasons."

— Young Adult Representative during the debate on Freemasonry

Oh, boy, now we can afford more Kraft Dinners

A recommendation to increase the rate paid to summer students from $205 plus $100 housing allowance to $405, or $305 plus housing, was passed without debate.

No one saluted

One of the lesser but more unusual items of business to be hoisted on Wednesday afternoon was an overture calling for the creation of an official denominational flag. The idea didn't fly.



The Pope, alias Young Adult Representative Scott Fraser, visits the Assembly and declares, "I am not the Antichrist."

True confessions

There were times during the week when it felt as if this year's General Assembly, like the elevator in one of the university residences, stopped only on odd floors. This was never more so than when the matter of *The Westminster Confession of Faith* and its references to the Roman Catholic Church and the Pope as the Antichrist came up, yet again, for debate — a great deal of debate. Arguments were heard from all sides of the issue — from those determined to preserve the wording of a historical document to those willing to tamper with it as a gesture of good faith to "our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters." When the smoke cleared, a recommendation that the document should never be changed was defeated, leaving the future open for possible changes. On Thursday, a declaratory act to the Book of Forms was passed, deploring the legacy of hatred and violence generated by such theological invective and recognizing the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the Roman Catholic Church.

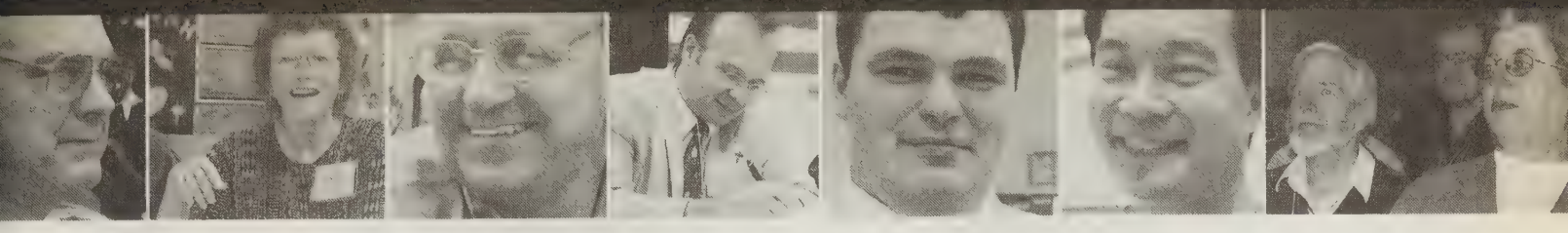
By the time Wednesday's business ended, commissioners were more than happy to have a free evening. Off they went to various events, including a visit to the Toronto of yesterday (at Black Creek Pioneer Village), the Toronto of today (a Blue Jays game), or a quiet night on the campus listening to the birds sing (surprisingly, there were no cuckoos).

THURSDAY

Thursday's business proceeded relatively smoothly, especially after the convener of the Business Committee warned of the possible need for an evening session (but, we're sure that was simply a coincidence). The day began by remembering Jack McIntosh and praying for his family and, then, went on to deal with a number of subjects.

What does your church use, grape juice or wine?

Permission was given to continue in a multilateral dialogue (softened to "conversation" by the Assembly) with the Christian Reformed Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the United Church. It was also pointed out that, following a



request by the 125th General Assembly, The Presbyterian Church in Canada has now obtained observer status with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

A new New Catechism

A sign that a General Assembly can try even the "patience of Joe" came during a discussion on a new 141-question Presbyterian catechism when, after much debate, the new Moderator, with a hint of weariness in his voice, declared an amendment to be "carried *and* well-debated." The catechism is to be considered and tested over a three-year period for use as a teaching resource. There was a motion to increase the timeframe to six years, but it was defeated. (A lot of time at Assembly is spent talking about time.) Sessions, presbyteries and synods are invited to send comments about the catechism's usefulness, suitability and content by January 31, 2004. The catechism is also to be translated into French and Korean.

The deacons, you say

In other Thursday afternoon matters:

An overture calling for the revival of the office of deacon was defeated.

In response to another overture, Assembly passed a recommendation declaring "the only formula appropriate and adequate for use in baptism is 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit.'"

Congregations and presbyteries are to be urged to use Internet technology as an effective way of communicating within their bounds and beyond.

Presbyterians concerned over the possibility of movies about the infamous Paul Bernardo and Karla Homolka were advised to contact the producers of such movies to express their displeasure. (Justice Ministries will serve as a resource for addresses to contact.)

And, as for those two presbyteries who failed to send commissioners, a letter will be sent to them from the Moderator expressing General Assembly's "disappointment and dismay."

FRIDAY

Hopeful signs

Ah, Friday. Say it softly and it's almost like praying (to paraphrase *West Side Story*). Two of the more pleasant Assembly moments were left for Friday morning: the addresses from the student representatives and the "report" from the YARs. In a way, it was too bad there wasn't a Thursday evening session, instead of a Friday morning one, because then they would have had a larger audience. (Pssst, don't tell anyone, but not all commissioners and guests stick around until the end for the courtesies and loyal addresses.)

The student representatives — Thomas Kim from Vancouver School of Theology, Sandy Sutherland from The Presbyterian College and Sarah Travis from Knox College — were articulate, personable and obviously bright, *and* they kept to their time limits. Not a bad combination for a minister, and one that should not be taken for granted.

When it came time for the YARs, at least one old codger could be heard sighing, "Oh, no, not another 'our impressions of General Assembly' skit." But, wait. These YARs were clever and witty — a kind of Presbyterian Kids in the (Assembly) Hall. They kept the commissioners laughing from start to finish. There was even an ecumenical visitor from Rome … a Pope … with dreadlocks. He removed his mitre, approached the microphone, stared out at the Assembly and exclaimed: "I am *not* the Antichrist! What's wrong with you people?" (A few dreadlocks shaped into horns bopped on his head.)

The YAR moderator also took a novel approach toward moderating: "You know what? This is ridiculous. I'm tired. Let's adjourn and go home."

And, following the courtesies and loyal addresses, it was time to go home. The 127th General Assembly was over. After a week of discussion, debate and, occasionally, discord, there were no fouls registered on the basketball scoreboard.

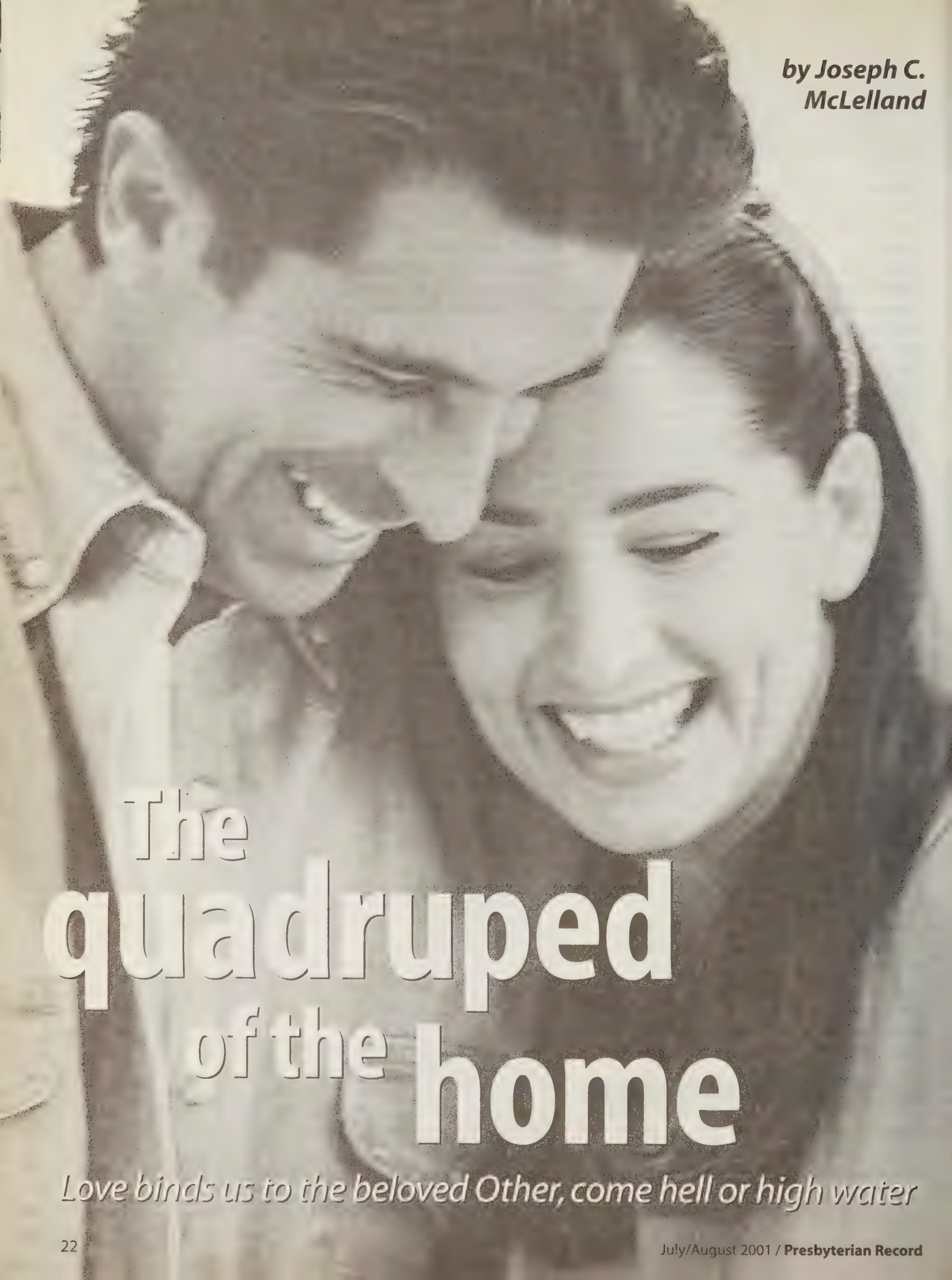
The 128th General Assembly will be hosted by the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry and will open in Cornwall, Ontario, on Sunday, June 2, 2002. *Deo Volente.* R

A copy of *Everything I Need to Know I Learned at General Assembly* to

- *Most trips to the microphone:* Murdo MacKay, followed closely by the legendary Richard Sand
- *Snappiest self-introduction by a commissioner:* Eric Muirhead. The way he said "from Northern Saskatchewan" made you proud to be a Canadian.
- *Earliest risers (even before the Business Committee):* The construction crew building a new parking lot next to the residences. And, what a view! If you squinted and used your imagination, you could turn the crane into the Eiffel Tower.
- *Cutest person at Assembly (no offence to the General Assembly office staff):* 18-month-old Andrew Abbot
- *Best give-away:* A copy of *Who is Jesus? A Reformed View* simply for filling out a *Presbyterian Record* survey form.
- *Most thankless Assembly task:* Schlepping all the necessary Assembly material back and forth from church offices. A special thank-you to Big Joe Walmsley.

"Thank you for coming to visit us in the spiritual Third World."

— Joe Reed thanking an ecumenical guest



by Joseph C. McLelland

The quadruped of the home

Love binds us to the beloved Other, come hell or high water

Strange that so many people still get married (even in university chapels), despite the hype from media and pollsters that, as an institution, marriage is dead. Of course, since it often leads to divorce, maybe it's merely ironic — like Mickey Rooney saying he believes in marriage, and that's why he's done it so often!

Or, maybe, monogamous marriage really is, first, a thing of nature, as seems clear from the data of anthropology. To which God added his blessing, making it also a matter of grace. Therefore, Christians should be bold in proclaiming the good news that while, in "nature," love and marriage may no longer seem to go together like horse and carriage, there's a great gift awaiting young lovers wherever they are.

What's the *good* of marriage? It's a secret hidden within our sexuality, but revealed only to those who break through the illusion that love is merely sex, unleash the spirit from its flesh, and discover the mystery that — in this case alone — one plus one equals one.

The great Jewish philosopher Martin Buber gave us the idea of "I and Thou" as the deepest truth of human being. He claimed that love reveals two people to each other by the presence of a *Thou*: "Out of this a marriage is built up by the *Thou* that is neither of the *I*'s ... [each] is able to look in the *Thou* of [the other's] eyes into a beam of the eternal *Thou*." This close encounter of the first kind stands in stark contrast to the tragic view of human relationships espoused by such modern icons as Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, for instance. For them, to look at another is to threaten that person with annihilation. Such mutual hostility in human relations results in the contemporary obsession with the isolated "self."

If the classic Jewish and Christian view seems overly romantic, the solid realism of G. K. Chesterton reminds us Christian marriage consecrates our togetherness; it does not make us angels. He scorned "that drear old dreamy bachelor notion" that being one flesh means "being perfectly happy or perfectly good ... or continuously affectionate!" He continues: "I tell you an ordinary honest man is part of his wife even when he wishes he wasn't. I tell you an ordinary good woman is part of her husband even when she wishes him at the bottom of the sea." And so: "Whether two people are for the moment friendly or angry, happy or unhappy, the Thing marches on, the great four-footed Thing, the quadruped of the home."

The Gospel is good news that, by taking our human nature on him, the divine Logos or Word graced that nature with new capacities of neighbourliness, companionship and even love — beyond what is "natural." Chesterton's insight warns us that "ordinary, good" folk can be honest enough to admit the profound truth that love binds us to the beloved Other, come hell or high water. Or, at least, through thick and thin: "for better: for worse, in sickness and ... "

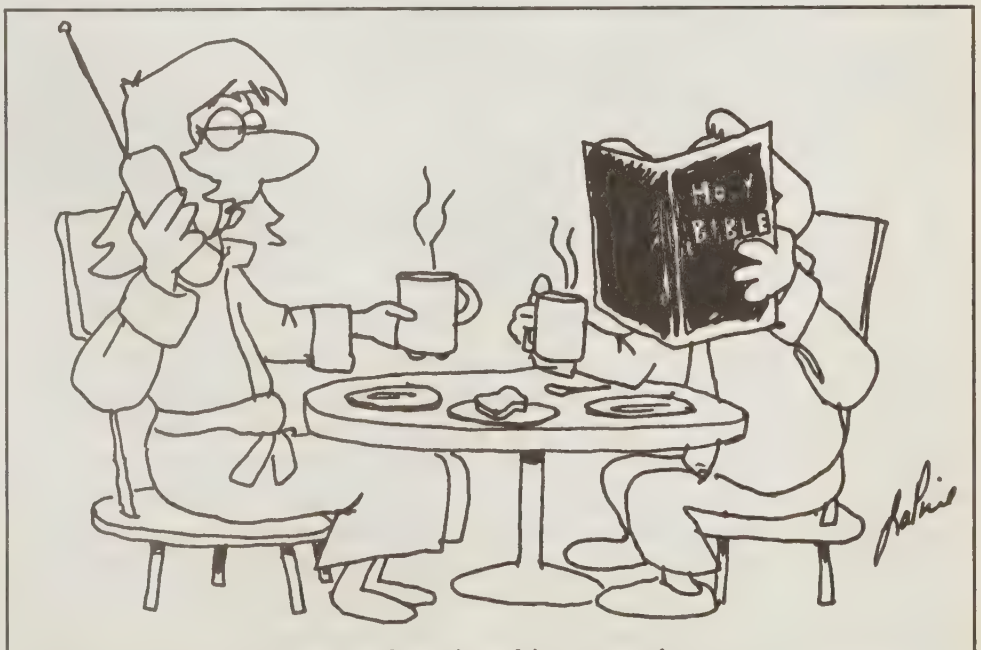
This is far from Hollywood hype or Playboy fantasy; it's not the cynical consumer philosophy, nor the eroticism of a seduced younger generation. Rather, it's part of the rich treasure that the Gospel reveals to open minds and longing hearts. The "quadruped of the home" may seem like an outdated way of life these days, but it has staying power. In fact, if it is truly a matter of covenanted love, then it is built into the created order, into human being and its sexuality. It's a mirror image of the coupling of God with Israel, and of the Christ with his Church.

Surely the day has come when the Church must stand against the world, against popular society with its individualism and hedonism and libertinism, to identify itself with an alien Word and a novel Good. With faith and hope and love as its virtues, not some vague spirituality or self-esteem. To unveil its vows and promises against all odds.

"Will you take this Other ... ?" Just as Jesus the Christ bore the image of divine grace, even so may his sisters and brothers claim this special gift of unity, the image of his covenanting together with us — for better: for worse, come hell or high water, etc., etc. R

"Whether two people are for the moment friendly or angry, happy or unhappy, the Thing marches on, the great four-footed Thing, the quadruped of the home"

Joseph C. McLelland is emeritus professor of McGill University and The Presbyterian College, Montreal, and a contributing editor of this magazine.



Yes, Mother, since his conversion he no longer has that stupid newspaper hiding his face at the table.

A day in a life with Katie

by Johanna Rian

The ordinary becomes sacred in the presence of a three-year-old

It is 5:30 on a Saturday morning in the early autumn. I gaze bleary-eyed at the clock — unable to sleep, unwilling to get out of bed. At this moment, life seems relentless and overbearing; too often, I feel like a human cannonball, starting each day with an explosive burst of anxiety that propels me up and out, past job activities and agendas, arcs me faster and higher into more demanding tasks, only gradually losing momentum late in the evening to deposit me with a thud against my pillow. Feeling sorry for myself, I crawl into the cold morning and creak downstairs for a fueling cup of coffee.

It had been a bad night, topping off a bad day and a bad week. My husband and I, recently separated, were enmeshed in the purposeless but inevitable sparring that characterizes marital dissolution. My daughter was napless after a long day at day care — too tired to play, too tired to eat, too tired to be soothed. The bedtime ritual gave way to a long series of power struggles. Eventually, we kissed goodnight in an uneasy truce, and she slept while I lay awake for a long, long time.

Now, in the grey, pre-dawn light, I slump into a chair with my coffee and reach for the remote control, hoping to catch the news, praying the still silent upstairs will remain so for a few more minutes. No chance.

Now, in the grey, pre-dawn light, I slump into a chair with my coffee and reach for the remote control, hoping to catch the news, praying the still silent upstairs will remain so for a few more minutes.

No chance.

"MOM!"

"MOM!"

A blast from well-developed three-year-old lungs vibrates the frame of the old house.

"MOM! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?"

I play dead and focus determinedly on the weather forecaster's bland grin.

"MOM! I WANT YOU TO COME UPSTAIRS RIGHT NOW!"

The dog, with his ear cocked and more optimism than I have, leads the way up the stairs into the dishevelled bedroom. I stumble over a beheaded Barbie and approach the throne-like bed where my daughter rests in a lazy recline, beckoning me with a smile and an outstretched arm.

"Hi, Mommy!"

"Hi, Katie." I stretch out on the bed beside her. She promptly rolls over to straddle my stomach and begins to play pat-a-cake with my cheeks.

"What are we going to do today, Mommy?"

"Well," I mumble between pats, "I thought we might have a quiet … "

"I know!" She begins to bounce a bit on my abdomen. "How about this? How about if we go downstairs and make cocoa and pancakes, and watch a movie, then get dressed, then go outside, then put on our bathing suits, then go swimming, then go ride the merry-go-round, then eat pizza and ice cream, then play the three little pigs and dress-ups, then take a bubble bath, then go to bed? How about that? Is it a deal?"

I am exhausted just listening. As I begin my alternative suggestions, she leaps out of bed and tugs me behind her down the stairs. Another day in a life with Katie has begun.

One of Katie's great strengths is her commitment to an agenda; a second is her taste in television programming. As I putter with pancake batter, she flicks the TV channels past the weather, past MTV,

past the home shopping channel before settling on a black-and-white, 1930s Hollywood classic.

After breakfast with Cary Grant, we venture out into a frosty blue autumn morning. We chase each other through the foothills of rustling leaves, alternately tackling each other and tossing up papery red and yellow rainstorms. Nickleby prances and leaps with us, barking and wagging and celebrating the day as only dogs do. We laugh and tumble; the three of us roll over and over on the soft grass, arms and legs and paws intermingling.

Later, we all pile into the car for a drive with no particular destination. It is a glorious day, picture perfect. As I drive, I feel the week's stresses unwinding behind me, and Katie and I sing favourite songs in unconventional harmony. We come to an intriguing place called Pumpkinland, with a scarecrow as big as a tractor and a hayride to a pick-it-yourself pumpkin patch. We stop to explore and, as we step out of the car, our nostrils meet a stout draught of manure.

"Yuck!" Her nose wrinkles so that her freckles almost disappear. "What's that smell?"

"It's manure, Katie."

"What's 'nure?"

"Well, it's fertilizer."

"What's fertilizer?"

"Um ... it's something that helps plants grow, so the farmers spread it out on the fields."

"What makes it smell so yucky?"

"Well ... "

"Mom! What *is* it!"

"Cow poop, Katie."

"COW POOP? They put POOP on the PUMPKINS? Why? I don't want any poop on *my* pumpkin. YUCK!"

I am relieved to see a few smiles on the faces of people passing by us, not so relieved to see wide grins on faces turning toward us from at least 30 feet away. Another of Katie's great strengths is her power of vocal projection; she may be her generation's Ethel Merman. We browse and, after much deliberation, select a perfect, poop-free pumpkin.

On the ride back, I see the sign marking the entrance to Seven Mile Creek and turn into the parking lot. Both child and dog pile out of the car and trail along behind me to the bank of the creek. We find



a grouping of rocks warmed by the sun and protected from the breeze, perfect for a few moments of rest. As they quietly investigate nearby, I lean back on my elbows, close my eyes and turn my face to the sun. I feel deeply content.

Suddenly, there is a splash and a squeal. I jerk upright to see Katie's shoes, socks, jeans and panties in a small pile on the creek bank. In the next glance, I spot my daughter and my dog tripping gaily away from me downstream, one small bare bottom and one white-fringed tail held high above the sparkling water and shimmering in the autumn sun.

Before they risk deeper waters, I capture and reinstall them in the car with the heater cranked all the way up. With one giggling, one panting and one shaking her head, we head home.

The remainder of the day is filled with games of pretend involving elaborate dress-ups and plots in which I am costumed, cast and prompted by The Director.

"OK, I'll be the mom and you be the baby. Baby, it's time for your nap. Now, no arguing!

"OK, now I'll be the princess and you be the boy. Oh, my! We'll be late for the ball!

"OK, let's be the three little pigs." Sometimes, Nickleby is drafted into the action. "Quick, here comes the big bad wolf!"

If I balk or protest or, worst of all, instruct her not to jump on the couch or pull Nickleby's tail or threaten to dislocate my little finger, I am haughtily reproved. "I won't invite you to my birthday party!" But if I take direction well, I am rewarded with fierce hugs and robust kisses and am frequently brought presents consisting of found treasures: a marble, a toy wrench, a string of beads lovingly wrapped in a doll's blanket or a tissue or a scarf from the dress-up collection.

After supper (pizza, of course — another of Katie's great strengths is her infallible memory, particularly concerning her agendas), bedtime moves easily through the ritual of teeth-brushing, jammies and the requisite three books. I tuck the comforter under her chin, and we close our eyes to say a prayer. I go first.

"Dear God, thank you for the gift of loving each other."

She adds, "And, please, God, tell Grandma and Grandpa and my daddy that I love them. And, please, let's go to the merry-go-round tomorrow. And I just want you to know that my mommy is the specialist mommy in the world. Amen."

As I gather her up in my arms for a good-night hug, she says, "Mom, this was a good day, wasn't it?"

"Yes, Katie, a very good day."

As I gather her up in my arms for a good-night hug, she says, "Mom, this was a good day, wasn't it?"

"Yes, Katie, a very good day"

"I love you, Mom."

"I love you, too, Katie."

With one last kiss, I turn off the light and go downstairs. I sink into a chair and reach for the TV remote control to catch the news. A soft snuffle from Nickleby, seated at my feet, stops me. I meet his liquid brown eyes and see, reflected there, a serenity that I haven't felt for a long time before today. As I stroke his ears, I think back on this unexpectedly lovely day that I could not have anticipated this morning when I grumbled out of bed. Then, in an easy peace, I go to bed.

At six o'clock the next morning, a small, warm body creeps under the covers to snuggle next to me. Katie entwines her arms around my neck, plants a kiss on my cheek and says in her best Ethel Merman voice, "MOM! What are we going to do today?"

I smile, and thank God for another day in a life with Katie. I reach out to her to hold on for the ride. R

Johanna Rian is a former theatre professor and currently works as a grants consultant for Young Audiences of Minnesota.

Bass River Charge

Some are called to Urban and Suburban Ministries.
Some are called to Rural Ministries.
Some are called "WEST."
Some are called to "hang out" around Toronto.
... and Some are called "EAST."

Some are called to be part of the Miramichi Adventure!

In the south of the Miramichi Presbytery,
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four distinct congregations, yet one in heart
and in love for Christ,
and one in desire for RENEWAL of faith and practice.

"ALPHA" has been part of that renewal.

If you are a fisherman or a sailor or a woodsman;
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Contact: Rev. Ralph MacKenzie,
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Hear, O Israel

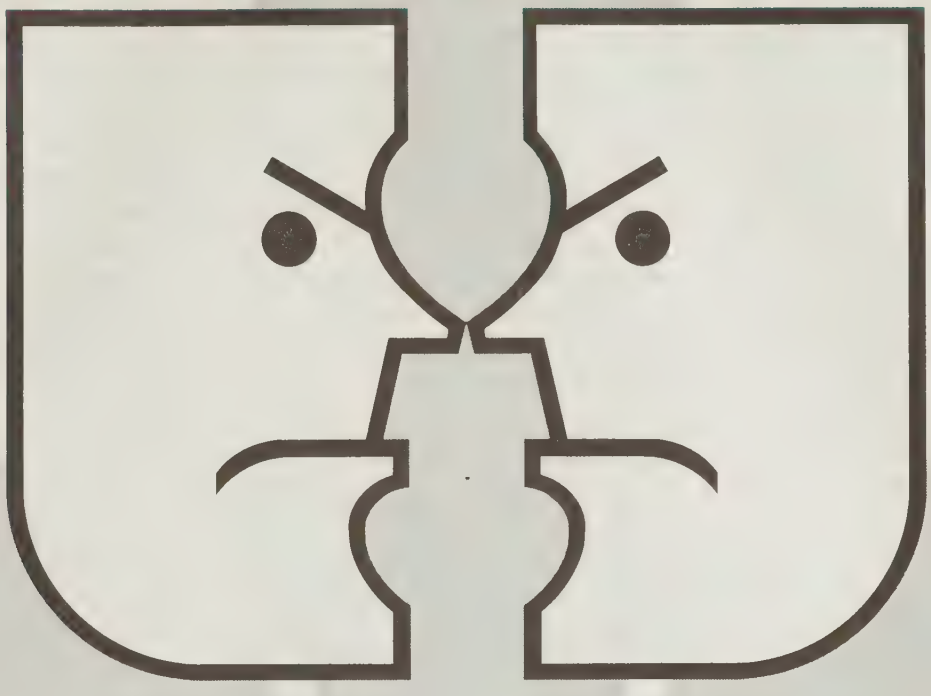
Hear, O Israel
All the loves we know
are one and the same love —
one in essence
one in spirit
one in power.
Love we share with husband or wife
and generations of family,
love shared with friend and stranger,
with enemy and lover —
all streams to the same river,
all water from one great sea.

Hear, O Israel
The love we know is many
as our beloved are many.
Our love's light shining onto each one
returns to imprint our heart
with the mysteries that name them to us
in their sovereign singularity.

Hear, O Israel
There is one love
And its name is Gather-Me-In.

— Wendy Turner Swanson

The Battles of Quebec



by Geoffrey Johnston

Two groups of high-minded imperialists clash at the Summit of the Americas

It must have been a sight for the early European mariners. They worked their way up the St. Lawrence with relative ease, then rounded Ile d'Orleans to find themselves in a narrow strait, barely a thousand yards wide and with cliffs on both sides, especially on the right. Champlain chose the cliff in 1608 for the first permanent European settlement in Canada. He built a little fort on the site, beside which Louis Hebert, a retired Parisian chemist, started the first European farm in the St. Lawrence Valley.

As D'Arcy McGee put it many years later, Quebec City stood on "the fortress cliffs that keep of Canada the key." The American colonies grew on the strip of land between the mountains and the sea. They were compact, farming and merchant colonies. But Canada was different. Quebec stood at the entrance to a vast waterway that swept in a great arc south and west into the interior of the continent.

In those days of wind and water, the great imperial rivalry turned, in large part, on the fortifications at Quebec. They had grown from Champlain's little trading post to an impressive line across the south side of the town, enclosing the settlement between the Plains of Abraham and the semicircle of cliffs beside the river. Wolfe dithered below those cliffs for most of the summer of 1759 before taking the gamble of his life. He slipped 4,500 men up l'Anse au Foulon to the Plains of Abraham and dared Montcalm to come out and fight. Montcalm took the bait and was soundly beaten. The British took the city, only to have to defend it from the rest of the French army. April 1760 saw the battle repeated, only with the sides reversed. But the British didn't surrender. They holed up in the city and waited to see who would come around Ile d'Orleans first. Fortunately, for them, it was the Royal Navy. The first round of the imperial struggle was over.

Well, not quite. There was that embarrassing bit at the peace negotiations when the British had to decide whether to keep Canada or Martinique. They chose Canada, and the debate was the occasion for Voltaire's acid comment about Canada being "*quelques arpents de neige*."

No sooner was that round of imperialism over when another began. This time, the protagonists were somewhat different.

The Americans were lusting after the Ohio Valley, but the British assigned it to Quebec. It was one of the intolerable acts that led to the Revolution. It was the same fight but different actors. The British were replaced by the Americans, and the French by the British. Once again, the key to the St. Lawrence Valley was the citadel at Quebec. The Americans stormed it, not from the Plains of Abraham but from the lower town on December 31, 1775. Naturally, it snowed. The Americans retreated ignominiously to New England.

The heritage of all this bloodshed and gunpowder is the only walled city in North America. It is a gracious old town, even in the bleak days of early spring, with a massive stone wall that follows

the route of the 18th-century defences and a fine citadel dating from the 19th century. During a rainy October in 1864, a handful of politicians in long coats gathered in an old post office within those walls overlooking the river. They worked out the resolutions that eventually became the British North America Act — the charter of the kingdom of the north, the country known as Canada.

It was the next stage in the imperial rivalry. Although driven by a political stalemate between Canada East and Canada West, the formation of Canada was, in a sense, a defensive measure — a union against the expansionism, real or imagined, of the United States. It was, after all, 1864. The Civil War was over, and the Union Army still in existence. Once the country was in place, the merchants of Montreal returned to their old ways, laying down the CPR, replacing the age of the great canoe trips with steam and iron. The young Scots who wintered on the Prairies, waiting for furs with their books and the mothers of their children, were replaced by Ukrainian peasants in sheepskin coats. In other parts of the world, it might have been called effective occupation to hold the last of the West against the flood of American settlement.

A century later, U.S. President Ronald Reagan opened a new chapter in imperial history. In the 20th century, the Americans tried many times to impose their rule on the Americas by force of arms. They were never as foolish as the assault on Quebec City, but the results were no more satisfactory. The Americas remained stubbornly independent. Reagan's idea was more subtle: to bring the Americas into a single financial system, the heart of which would be in lower Manhattan. The latest stage of this grand design took place, appropriately, in Quebec City, the Summit of the Americas, April 20-21, 2001.

But something went wrong on the way to continental integration. Instead of holding their meeting in the Chateau Frontenac, a magnificent railway hotel overlooking the river (almost on the site of the first citadel), our leaders chose a building outside the walls. To defend themselves against protesters, they built another wall. Instead of a respectable 20 feet of masonry, it was a three-metre-high chain-link fence set in portable blocks of concrete. Before long, the blocks were decorated with graffiti. Some people found the perimeter offensive; to me, it was tacky. The new wall was not worthy of the city. Quebec has been the scene of great imperial rivalries, but it did not use its inherited defences in this latest battle for the Americas.



Gathering at the People's Summit in Quebec.

Nor did the battle itself seem impressive. On the one side of the fence were the police, dressed up like bugs. On the other side were the demonstrators, most of them far away but a few thousand beside the fence. The most aggressive were also dressed like bugs. They were the ones who tipped the fence and then spent an hour or so tossing tear-gas canisters back and forth with the police. In that exchange, the only people who got hurt were the non-combatants, the people who had no intention of breaching the fence but who came to it simply to thumb their noses at the cops.

An observer of the charge of the Light Brigade remarked, *"C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre."* This battle of Quebec was neither. The weekend made good television but it had no class.

Maybe politics is only romantic in retrospect. As 1066 showed, "History is not what you thought; it is what you can remember." Sir John A. Macdonald doodled through the momentous discussion of the Quebec Resolutions. Before the smoky events of the summit weekend, a couple thousand people met around the city in church basements and CEGEP schools to prepare an alternative vision of the Americas. Simply put, the alternative argues that commercial and financial treaties must fit into a framework of human rights. Human rights and the environment are not sidebars to commercial treaties; they are prerequisites.

After the last Summit of the Americas in Santiago, the Hemispheric Social Alliance produced a little book called *Alternative for the Americas*. My colleague, John Dillon, wrote the chapter on investment. We were supposed to have an update for this meeting, but the French translation wasn't ready. To release a publication in Quebec City without a French text would have been something out of the 1950s. Hence, we have no text at all.

My criticism of the original book was that it was reactive. It followed the neo-liberal agenda point by point and argued the opposing case. I said we needed a manifesto, a paper that set out the kind of hemisphere we wanted to see, without ignoring but without being bound to the neo-liberal case. In the meantime, we have a short statement from the People's Summit. It can be found at www.peoplessummit.org.

The real work is done apart from these weekends, in the patient building up of grassroots support, in the slow developing of an intellectually credible alternative to the prevailing orthodoxy. Events like the Summit of the Americas are largely photo-ops, moments to get the journalists' attention and put the case to the public. I thought the French papers,

CBC Radio and CBC-TV in English at least, and papers like the *Hamilton Spectator* were more than fair to our side of the argument. We had expected minimal coverage of the weekend, except for the shenanigans at the fence and the official statements. We were pleasantly surprised.

For us, it was a kind of working holiday. We stayed with a former student who lives in Quebec City. The first evening we had a nice dinner and discussion of the issues with some of his former parishioners. The official workshop we attended was something of a bust, but we went to a number of other gatherings that were worthwhile. One was on the next stage of the debt campaign, and the other to help some Mexican friends decide whether they want to do something similar at a UN meeting in Monterey next spring.

We also went to a session on "dollarization," or the substitution of the U.S. dollar for the local currency. Panama has never had its own currency. Argentina has pegged its peso to the U.S. dollar for some years. Ecuador recently went to the greenbacks; Salvador and Guatemala are in process. It is an idea whose time has not and may never come. But it is consistent with *l'projet d'empire* that President Reagan announced. We should be ready to deal with it if it becomes a subject of public debate.

Imperialism is a loaded word. It has taken many forms. There were the freebooters who massacred the West Indians; but there were also the decent folk who inadvertently infected the Indians with diseases for which they had no resistance. There were the capitalists, like Rhodes, who wanted to milk Africa for all it was worth. One kind of high-minded imperialist thought Europeans should rule backward races for their own good. Another kind thought they should become Christian and learn the arts of the West, again for their own good.

Let us give our leaders the benefit of the doubt. Let us take them at their word and assume the democracy clause is meant to mean something. Such people are high-minded imperialists, people who believe democracy and market reform are keys to a better life for all. Other people should adopt the western system because it is good for them. It would seem that the people of the Western Hemisphere have, for the most part, elected governments that also hold this view. Only a few inside the fence, dissident folk from St. Lucia and Barbados, cared to disagree.

Those outside the fence are like the missionaries of old. We, too, are high-minded imperialists, convinced that the world should adopt our point of view for its own good. We are not, as the establishment press sometimes says, out to impose our view on others against their will. One cannot go far in the Hemispheric Social Alliance without speaking Spanish. Ours is a continental network of dissidents parallel to the continental network of governments. It is a miscellaneous collection of unionists, native people, intellectuals and Christians who see the dark side of this *projet neo liberal.*

Because the fence divided one internationalist world-view from another, perhaps it is wrong to speak of imperialism. The same languages were spoken inside and outside. The old imperialism was basically geographic. There were imperial countries and there were colonies. Life nowadays is not as simple. But because the neo-liberal heartland is in the United States, and because the corporations that stand most to benefit are mostly American, imperialism is not an altogether inappropriate designation.

The tumult and the shouting dies. The captains and the kings depart. We don't have kings anymore. Adrienne Clarkson was in town, but for other reasons. Life returns to normal. The civil servants will haggle over clauses in the treaty to be. The rest of us will do what we can to see that it never comes to pass. The television returns to the vagaries of the stock-market and the troubles of Stockwell Day. Even President George W. Bush's belligerent comments about Taiwan don't come on until half-way through the news.

Thirty-five thousand people, give or take a few thousand, showed up on the weekend of April 20. Was this a passing fancy? Or will it be one of those moments in our time when people "will think themselves accursed they were not here"? R

Geoffrey Johnston is a retired minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada living in Dunnville, Ont., and former director of studies at The Presbyterian College in Montreal.

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St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church
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For questions, please contact:
Mr. Rod Wilson (506-466-3595) or
Mr. Derek O'Brien (506-465-8554).

Tom Dickey

It's a family affair

How a community food drive banks on volunteers

The weather in Ancaster on February 3 was much what you would expect for a small Ontario town in the middle of winter — cold, with the promise of flurries. On top of that, it was a Saturday. So the good citizens of Ancaster could be forgiven if they were surprised to hear the gentle clank of their mailboxes being opened and shut that morning. Upon opening their mailboxes, they were most likely relieved not to find an early-arriving census form or a late-arriving income tax slip but, instead, a timely flyer reminding them of the Ancaster Community Food Drive taking place in exactly one week

It was a scene being repeated at every household in town, thanks to some meticulous organizing, combined with the efforts of 93 volunteer drivers and 186 "runners" (two per driver). It was also a scene that has been repeated annually in the community for the past eight years.

The idea for the food drive was first suggested by an elder at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. He had previously attended a church in Toronto that had been involved, along with other churches, in a similar project. His suggestion was approved by the session of St. Andrew's and, subsequently, presented to the Ancaster Ministerial Association. In good ecumenical (and Presbyterian) fashion, a committee was formed with representatives from as many local churches as possible.

That spirit of co-operation still exists today and is the secret behind the remarkable success of the food drive. This year, about 400 volunteers were involved in the drive, both collecting food and sorting it (with wonderful efficiency!) at St. John's Anglican Church Parish Hall. The volunteers were a diverse group, including students, seniors, church members, service clubs, families and politicians from all levels of government. Their common goal was to provide food for the hungry.



Photo: *Ancaster News*

Bob Wade, mayor of Ancaster, joins volunteers in sorting the mountains of food collected for the Ancaster Community Food Drive.

Besides serving as volunteers, students played another key role in the project: every school in Ancaster, as well as a high school in Hamilton, conducted its own food drive. Their contributions were collected by, yes, still more volunteers — this time, members of the local fire department — the day before the drive. The fire hall also served as a drop-off location.

By the time the drive ended, over 24,500 kilograms of food had been collected, as well as $1,650 in donations, for distribution to eight local relief agencies.

According to Ron Slade, a member of the drive's organizing committee, the pressure on relief agencies is rising dramatically, even as welfare roles shrink. "What we have is fewer people on welfare but more and more of the working poor," Slade points out. "They may have enough to pay the rent but not enough to buy food."

The Ancaster Community Food Drive certainly lives up to its purpose. As for its spirit, perhaps another member of the committee, Betty Kobayashi, puts it best: "If we can't give when the weather is bad and when people are most in need, then we're not really giving from the heart." R

With information from the *Ancaster News*.



David and Arlene Onuoha

Husband of overseas worker dies from traffic accident

David Onuoha, husband of Arlene Onuoha, an International Ministries staff member serving in Nigeria, died suddenly in Nigeria, May 18, as a result of a car accident. Besides Arlene, he leaves their three children: Agwa, Urey and Rebecca.

Comox Valley Church dedicated

The sanctuary was filled to capacity and then some when 300 people attended the dedication service for Comox Valley Church, Courtenay, British Columbia. A church extension of Canada Ministries, the congregation's new building is approximately 450 square metres (or 6,000 square feet, at a cost of approximately $100 per square foot). The pulpit, lectern, baptismal font and Communion table were built and donated at cost by Bob Preuss, an elder at St. Columba Church, Parksville. Rev. D'Arcy Lade, the minister of Comox Valley, was joined in the dedication service by Rev. Kerry McIntyre, clerk of the Presbytery of Vancouver Island, Rev. Clay Kuhn, the moderator, and guest preacher Rev. Noel Kinnon.



Church puts its own stamp on history

This past May, the congregation of Orillia Church (St. Andrew's), Orillia, Ontario, celebrated its 150th anniversary. To mark the occasion, they ordered the usual commemorative coffee mugs, pens, stationery, T-shirts and tote bags. But one memento stuck out from the crowd — a special issue 47-cent Canada Post stamp featuring a colour picture of St. Andrew's. Attached to envelopes with the return address of the church, the collector stamps sell for $1.50.

A Presbyterian church, identified on old maps as the Scotch Church, was built on the corner of Peter and Neywash streets in Orillia in 1851. The current brick structure on the same site was built in 1889. It was designated a historical building in 1983.

Record wins three Canadian Church Press awards

The *Presbyterian Record* received three Canadian Church Press (CCP) awards for 2000 at the annual CCP convention, held in Winnipeg, May 3-5. First and foremost, the *Record* was awarded first prize in the General Excellence category for magazines and journals. "This periodical shows just how effectively a black-and-white magazine can compete with full-colour publications," commented one judge. "I am hard put to suggest improvements when something works as well as this." The magazine also received first place in the poetry category for Margaret Avison's poem "An-Astronomy" (March 2000, page 12), which was praised for its "fresh, succinct" use of language. "This is a cerebral poem," the judge stated. "The Christian images quietly come forward." And, once again, the *Record*'s resident humorist, Peter Plymley II, received an award for Humour — this time an honourable mention for his December 2000 column. "Beautifully written," said one judge. "The end made me weep. There is no higher praise." The Canadian Church Press is an association of 83 Christian publications across Canada.

briefly noted

Mission staff departures and arrivals
Arrivals: *Lillian Sparling*, from Malawi, July 28; *Brian Neilson*, from Malawi, Aug. 7; *Sherlen Barsoum*, from Cyprus, mid-August; *Sonya Henderson*, from Romania, mid-August.
Departures: *Cath Lam*, for Taiwan (medical student, two months), June 15; *Anne Hooper*, for India (nursing student, two months), July 2.
Church offices staff departures: *Patti Walmsley*, assistant to the administrator, Pension and Benefits, June 8, for greener pastures.

Deaths: *Alexander MacSween*, Moderator of the 106th General Assembly, May 27.

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Church school takes "virtual" trip to Malawi

Although St. Andrew's Church in Sackville, New Brunswick, is a comparatively small congregation of 50 families, it has an active church school and youth group totalling about 40 young people. During March, they chose to set aside the regular curriculum and involve themselves in the 2000-2001 Learning/Sharing Project, "Partners: Meeting Friends in Malawi."

There is a warm spot at St. Andrew's for Malawi. Brian McNally, a member of the congregation, met his wife, Hannah, while serving in Malawi with CUSO. Upon moving to Canada with their two children, Ukupa and Hazen, Brian and Hannah eventually settled in Sackville. Last year, the congregation raised $3,000 for the "Clean Water in Malawi" project. In response to a request from the Atlantic Missionary Society for banners for overseas churches, the group at St. Andrew's handcrafted a banner which was sent to Hannah's home congregation of St. Michael's and All Angels in Blantyre.

The young people played various roles in bringing Malawi to life at St. Andrew's. The senior students did in-depth research on the country under Brian's guidance and shared their information by means of posters. On the wall beside the posters, a mural of a typical town scene in Malawi emerged.

The junior boys built a mud hut in the church basement, settling for wood, corrugated cardboard and straw instead of real mud. Meanwhile, Hannah and the junior girls breathed life into the atmosphere with the intoxicating aroma of the banana fritters they made.

Dr. Elizabeth Massarelli and Dr. Ross Thomas were invited to the mud hut one Sunday to talk about health care and, in particular, about malaria — the leading cause of death in young children in Malawi. They were told how $4 is enough to buy an impregnated mosquito net that could save a child's life.

In response, the young people cut out 100 paper figures of children and an equal number of chenille wire mosquitoes, sticking both to the walls in the church. In one corner, under a sign reading "The Great Mosquito Net," a crib wrapped in netting was set up. For every $4 contributed, one paper child would go under the protection of the net and one mosquito would go to "mosquito heaven." Small, net bags in the black, red and green of the Malawian flag and decorated with a mosquito were distributed by the children to the congregation to be filled with donations. More than $900 was raised. That meant 225 nets would soon be on their way to Malawi. (*From a report by Jean Scobie*)



Young people from St. Andrew's Church, Sackville, N.B., pose in front of the replica of a mud hut they built when Malawi came to their church basement.

Census of two million Christians in four countries to provide snapshot of faith

A census-style survey of more than two million churchgoers in four countries will provide Christians with an unprecedented snapshot of the faith and a "mission resource" to help church leaders plan for the future, according to the chair of the survey's international steering committee and president-elect of the Uniting Church in Australia, Dr. Dean Drayton.

The International Church Life Survey was distributed to about 500,000 respondents in both the United States and England in April, and to 850,000 Australians and between 250,000 to 300,000 New Zealanders in May. Drayton points out the four countries were chosen because the project had grown through an informal network. He expects another two or three countries will join the next survey in 2006.

The core survey consists of about 50 questions seeking basic information such as age, background and denomination. Critical questions include attitudes to the role of women in the church, sexuality, indigenous issues and understanding of the role of the Bible. Church members are asked how far they live from their church, whether they believe they are growing in their faith, how they share their faith with others and how they relate to the church community. Individual congregations and denominations may add questions of their own to the core survey.

A total of 17,300 congregations from more than 18 denominations will take part. (*ENI*)

Small, rural congregations are churches' heartland, says U.S. survey

Despite an increase in so-called "mega-churches" — which have congregations numbering several hundred or even thousands — in U.S. cities and suburbs, half of all U.S. congregations remain rooted in rural areas and have fewer than 100 participating adult members, a new study of U.S. churches, synagogues and mosques has concluded.

The "Faith Communities Today" study by Hartford Seminary paints a complex portrait of a changing landscape for American religion, where non-Christian groups are making their mark but where institutionalized worship remains central to the United States.

The centre of U.S. religious life is in the worship of the congregations," says Carl Dudley, a co-director of the study. "The level of commitment and energy there is where the pulse of American religious life can be found.

But if worship remains central to the U.S. religious experience, the growing diversity of worship is remarkable. As other studies have noted, the vast majority of new congregations in the United States are Evangelical Protestant, continuing a 50-year trend. But the study shows that there has been a surge in the past decade of new Jewish, Mormon, Muslim and Baha'i congregations. More than 20 per cent of new congregations belong to those faiths. "This trend is rapidly putting a new face on American religion," the study concluded.

The five-year study is a landmark, in part because of its depth and scope: it covers 41 religious groups, many of them non-Christian. More than 14,000 congregations participated in the survey. Organizers say the survey data apply to 90 per cent of U.S. worshippers. (*PCUSA News*)

Correction

For information on the Hungarian male choir tour in Ontario during August and September (News, June issue), contact Barbara Nawratil: **1-800-619-7301**, ext. 259; bnawratil@presbyterian.ca.

Australia's churches call on nation to acknowledge "stolen generations"

The National Council of Churches in Australia has called on the nation to act on the recommendations of a controversial report about the forcible removal of indigenous children from their families during six decades of the 20th century. The removal by the federal authorities, with the co-operation of the churches, of many Aboriginal children — now known as the "stolen generation" — from their families between 1910 and 1970 remains one of the most sensitive and hotly debated issues in Australian society. Many of the children were put in church-run institutions where it was intended they should adapt to white culture.

The council represents 13 major churches, including Anglican, Lutheran, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Uniting and the Salvation Army. In a statement released in late May, the council's executive body recommended the establishment of a "healing commission" and a national government fund to compensate or otherwise help the victims of forcible removal.

The council has publicly committed itself to educating the churches on their involvement in the history of child removal, making church and agency records accessible and addressing allegations of abuse in church-related institutions. (*ENI*)

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news scan

(Another) Presbyterian to head Inter-Varsity

The board of directors of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of Canada has unanimously selected Geri Rodman, a member of Knox Church, Toronto, to assume the responsibilities of president and chief executive officer. After a brief overlap with outgoing president Jim Berney (also a Presbyterian and a member of Bridlewood Church, Scarborough, Ontario), Rodman will assume the leadership in January 2002.

Internet project hopes to bring Reformed Christians together

A new Internet project, "Reformed Online," has been launched to help promote unity among the world's more than 700 Reformed Protestant denominations. The project's Web site — www.reformed-online.net — provides information about Reformed churches world-wide, allowing them to communicate directly with one another. It complements the official Web site of The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (www.warc.ch) which was relaunched in May. (*ENI*)

Presbyterian congregations in Taiwan look to create healthy marriages

The Taipei Christian Academy and seven congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan in Northeast Taiwan are conducting a marital-communications training workshop aimed at reviving marriages in the wake of the country's rising divorce rate, which has sextupled over the past 30 years. Currently, more than 50,000 couples divorce every year in the small island nation. (*Taiwan Church News*)

U.S. church apologizes for not doing more to oppose slavery

The General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has apologized for not doing enough in the 19th century to oppose slavery. At a meeting April 21-24, the board of the 834,000-member denomination passed a resolution declaring the failure of many religious communities in the United States, including the Christian Church, to work or speak out against slavery to be "a wicked apathy that permitted and resulted in untold suffering among the African people." (*ENI*)

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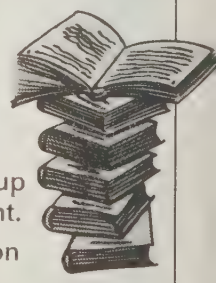
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Stewart Folster:

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In the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry, Christianity and native spirituality meet in harmony

In Ojibwa, his name is Laughing Bear of the Eagle clan. To the rest of the world, he is Rev. Stewart Folster, ordained Presbyterian minister, pastor of the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry.

Folster is the only native person currently active in ordained ministry with The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Originally from Manitoba, he was born on the Broken Head Ojibwa Nations Reserve near Beausejour. Folster says his decision to enter the ministry probably came about because of the influence of his grandfather, Jim Folster. A church elder on the reserve and a faithful Christian, he took Stewart to church every Sunday.

"My background was Anglican, but I didn't see much difference between the two branches of the church," he says. "I was led to the Presbyterian Church mostly because they offered me a job as a lay missionary in a native youth mission in Winnipeg where I worked for 11 years."

During that time, the ministers and church elders in Winnipeg encouraged Folster to study for the ministry. He did so, taking courses through a United Church seminary in Manitoba and the Vancouver School of Theology. He was ordained in 1996.

The United Church seminary, the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Centre in Beausejour, is a native Christian training centre that teaches Bible study, theology, and native culture and spirituality. "There," Folster says, "I learned about the style of worship we have adopted here."

Folster and his wife, Terry, moved to Saskatoon in 1992 and began working with a native Presbyterian worshipping community that had been established some years earlier. The liturgy of Folster's service is typically Presbyterian, but the style is culturally sensitive.

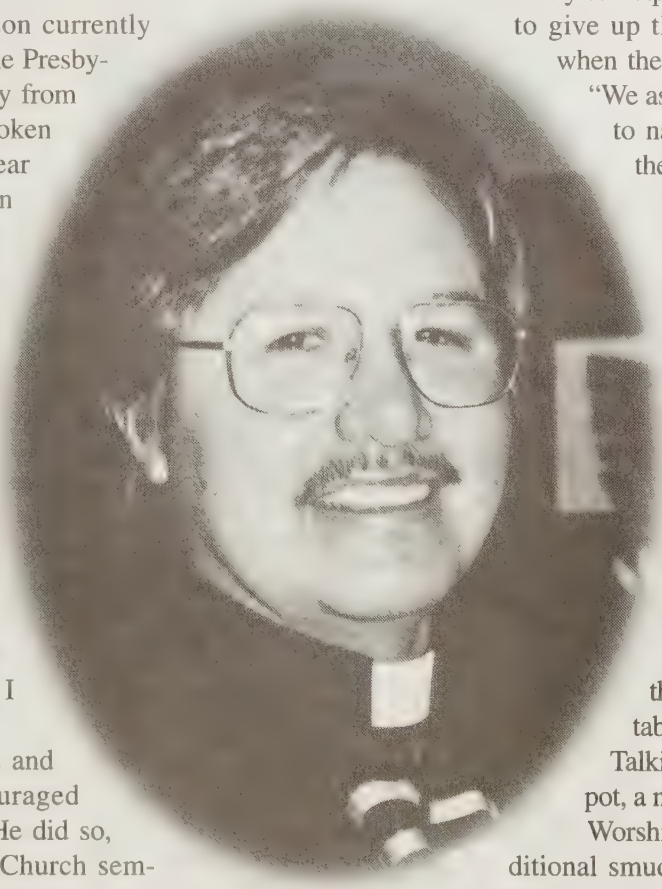


Photo by Darlene Polachic

"We try to help people understand they don't have to give up their traditional roots and culture when they become Christians," Folster says. "We ask people to respect and be sensitive to native spirituality and the beliefs of the people.

"I don't see a contradiction in this. Most people here have met Jesus at some time in their lives. We are all worshipping the same God. And the teachings of faith, honesty, kindness, caring, sharing, love, honour and respect are the same in both beliefs. In the Native Circle, we emphasize respect, love and kindness."

At Sunday afternoon worship services, the congregation sits in a circle around a low table. The candle at its centre represents Christ the Light. At the four corners of the table are a Bible with a smooth, round Talking Stone on top, a ceramic smudge pot, a native drum, and an offering basket.

Worship services always begin with a traditional smudging ceremony where sweetgrass and sage are burned. "For native people, plant life represents kindness," Folster explains, "and the smudging ceremony is one of cleansing and purification. It is the first thing that happens in our worship service. It is another way to pray."

Services follow the common liturgy of the Presbyterian Church: call to worship, hymns, prayer of confession, the Lord's Prayer, Scripture readings, meditations and offering. But there are added features. "After a short meditation, I pass the Talking Stone to the person on my left, following the path of

the sun. I invite that person to share his or her feelings about the message, Scripture readings, or anything else spiritual that is happening in his or her life. That person can share or pass the stone to the next person. We go around the circle."

During the pastoral prayer, individuals also have the opportunity to pray aloud or silently while holding the Talking Stone. Folster says the rock is doubly symbolic. In native spirituality, rock has always symbolized faith; in Christianity, it reminds us that Christ is the Rock, the foundation of our faith.

Up to 50 people attend Native Circle Ministry, with about 15 to 20 forming the strong core of regulars. Most are native, either Ojibwa or Plains Cree. But not all.

"We don't focus on nationality or numbers," Folster says. "What's important is introducing people to Christ and helping them feel his love. One of the things Christ commissions us to do is to help people. If we help one person in all the time we serve in this mission, we will have done well."

Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry services are held every Sunday afternoon at Circle West Presbyterian Church on Wedge Road. Folster says the circle is never closed or full.

"What will people find here? A new family. People who will pay attention to them. What I'm hearing from the people here is that they feel comfortable. They feel they belong. They like our casual, flexible way of doing things; yet, at the same time, they find it is spiritual. People become close to each other; they become like a family."

Folster, whose own native heritage is perpetually honoured by the "name colour" ribbons on his clerical shirt, has no qualms about the culturally sensitive worship format in his church. "I'm not trying to blend two religions," he says. "I don't believe I have to give up any part of my native spirituality to be a Christian and follow Christ to the fullest. Most of the people who come to this church believe the same way." R

Darlene Polachic is a free-lance writer living in Saskatoon.

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Matthew McKay

"... And lead us not into *Temptation Island*, but deliver us from *Survivor* ..."

Reality television serves up a level of barbarism not seen since the Goths sacked Rome

Despite shamelessly borrowing material from William Golding and the fourth chapter of Luke's Gospel, popular culture has served up two more sumptuous dishes to its ceaseless, self-honouring and self-deifying banquet to which the affluence of North America is perpetually invited: *Temptation Island* and *Survivor*.

Welcome to the newest genre of the popular arts known as "reality TV." You'll discover a level of barbarism not seen since the many tribes of Goths sacked Rome in 410, introducing (among other things) atrocious table manners and the custom of bathing only biannually.

"Very truly I tell you, when you did it unto the least of my family, you did it unto me." However, when *someone else* does it to the least of our family, and *we* are served up ample helpings of this on prime-time television — now *that's* entertainment!

Was Thomas Hobbes right when he said, unless something could save us from ourselves, life would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short?" Solitary and short have yet to be seen; but we humans seem to have an insatiable appetite for the poor, nasty and brutish — as long as it is someone else's "reality" on my TV.

The title of this column (Vox Populi) speaks volumes about this situation. Before we turn on that familiar whipping post called "the media," let us remember the old Roman maxim: "The voice of the *people* is the voice of God." It seems as though, episode by episode, we the people — we the gods — speak and, with the loudest and mightiest voice, demand more pain, more shattered relationships, more mean-spirited voyeurism. And the priestly order of popular culture comes running to our altar with another fatted-calf of "other people's pain."



Monty Brinton/CBS

***Survivor II* contestants Tina Wesson, left, and Jerri Manthey talk while working on a chore.**

But what exactly are these programs of which I speak? Allow me to offer a brief synopsis.

Survivor (starting with the lesser of two evils) has simply replaced "doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God" with "do it unto your neighbour before your neighbour does it unto you!"

Picture two teams of people in the wilderness (along with a film crew to rival that of Cecil B. de Mille — how real!). Each team must oust one of its own at the end of each episode *if* the team as a whole should fail a "skill-testing challenge" put to them. However, instead of preparing as a team and working together to overcome the challenge, each team's members devote all their time and energy to scheming, plotting and back-stabbing in a desperate attempt to be the last one standing — whatever the cost may be — all brought to us in full colour. After all, turning the other cheek, loving those who persecute us and praying for our enemies is all well and good — but what sort of ratings would that bring in?

Temptation Island simply offers a complete antithesis to the gospel of grace, mercy, peace and love. It presents all that would seek to separate us from God in a fashion even more perfectly than C. S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*.

This piece of "reality" presents many happy couples being marooned on a five-star resort island with all their expenses paid. Sounds like the ideal, the utopian — dare one say, paradise? All they have to do is provide the viewing public with unrestricted access to the shattering of their lives and relationships. These men and

women are each banished to separate areas of the luxurious island to meet voluptuous members of the opposite sex. The job of the host (see the serpent in Genesis 3) is to ensure that sufficient acts of infidelity, betrayal and mental cruelty are committed to cleave the happy couples and entertain us — one and the same thing really.

Oh my dear Thomas Hobbes, you warned me about this, I know! You looked at humanity's *inhumanity* to itself, you looked at the doctrine of kill or be killed that was held to be the way the world was ordered, and you said, " ... by this reasoning, successful wickedness hath obtained the name virtue!"

We are called as disciples of Christ to remember our duty of Christian stewardship: not to turn a profit on the pain and misery of each other. The reality of the gospel (as opposed to "reality" TV) is the faithfulness and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The reality of the gospel is that not even one of us has to compete for God's love and redemption. We are not set against each other. Not one person will be voted off God's island. And may one be so bold as to add that the God who hung on a cross and knew pain beyond pain does not look upon our suffering and brokenness as jolly entertainment. How soon we forget that, as "Team Humanity," we failed the challenge put to us; yet, the one who was ousted, conspired against and punished was our Lord.

Indeed, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Nero and Domitian are long dead. But, after thousands of allegedly "progressive years," we "cultured" and affluent North Americans seem incapable of leaving the Colosseum and the barbaric games contained therein.

Pray God that, through the love that created us, the power that loved us all into existence, and the gospel that proclaims God's desire that we live in that love and actualize it in joyful communion with each other, we may love *God* and *each other* more completely. If we cannot — Pogo, you were right! "The enemy is us." R

Matthew McKay is a student at Knox College and youth director of Calvin Church, Toronto. He is a member of St. Andrew's Church in Saskatoon.

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Michael Munnik

Groping for God

Reflections on the summer after the first year of university

People warned me: the summer after the first year of university will be dull and depressing. They were absolutely right. When I got back to Nanaimo, British Columbia, after eight months in Ottawa, everything seemed much smaller than I remembered. Gone, too, were my new, fascinating friends and the dimly lit pubs where we had discussed art, politics and spirituality. I was far from the learning, far from the ideas.

It was a low point for me in almost every sense, and that included my spiritual life. I had committed myself to daily prayer and Scripture reading for about three years; but, over that summer, it was only another routine. I could see it happening, but I had no energy to change things. In frustration, I wrote these lines:

Could all my prayers be poems, Lord,
That I would write to you in thought?
Just whimsical decipherings
That I compose each night during
The silent time inside my head
As I undress, prepare for bed
And check the alarm on my clock:
Could these thoughts be my prayers to you?
My night's devotion, phrased just so,
A conversation, a monologue;
The old complaints dragged up again.
(Oh, Lord, I know, I know my faults,
I know every iniquity —
These are confessed as they are done.
Just tell me, Lord, that I can say,
"For all, O God, I've done today,
Each sin I've winced as soon as done,
When asked to stand, I turned away —
Forgive me, then let me move on.")

The night's reflection of my day,
At times so low, in spots so good,
And all the names I bring to you:
The women who surround my thoughts,
Each passing night another charm
Or two or three could cycle through
My mind's inconstant, petty lust;
The tender ways I think of them
And wish them well, and wish them here —
Oh, Lord, regard me fondly yet
And comfort them if they think of me.
Tonight, again, my brother, Lord:
I pray for opportunity
In terms I only can compare
To those made by society;
And is this fair? I'll never know,
But I pray for him as I know how,
If only to assure myself
His name is lifted up somewhere.

My parents — give them rest, O Lord.
My friends — just thanks for them is all.
The church, when I will think of it.
The world I hear of in the news:
Here, Lord, my nightly shopping list.
I sigh for it as much as you,
Knowing this worn-out prayer won't work
With no sincerity at heart.
But, God, I know no other way,
And better this than no regard.
But does this mock you — does it shame
The powerful instrument of prayer?
Lord, I'm not sure. I think too much
Now, when I should be listening
And turning all my thoughts on you.
But in this poem, Lord, I pray,
As I will ask you every day,
Reveal to me what is the truth
If only I keep seeking you.

Writing this didn't make the summer any better; but it serves as a benchmark. Every so often, I come back to it and read it. I remind myself we can't be up all the time. Parts of our relationship with God will sag, and that's OK. It opens us up for continual rediscovery.

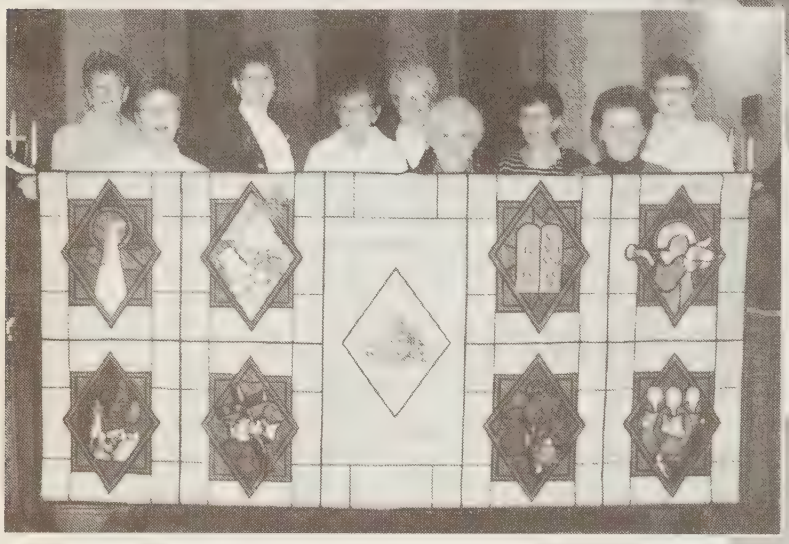
The Apostle Paul shows the same glimpses of humanity, of failing, in his eloquent speech to the Areopagus. He says, " … that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him — though indeed he is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). I love that Paul says "perhaps" — that connecting with God is not a certainty. God is always with us, right where we need him; but, sometimes, we need to grope. "Seek and you shall find" — but we need to keep seeking.

Mercifully, God is always there for us to find. R

Michael Munnik is a journalism student at Carleton University in Ottawa and the youth minister at Trinity Church, Kanata, Ont.



SUMMERSIDE CHURCH, Summerside, P.E.I., recently completed a Sunday school learning centre focused on Noah's Ark. Members of the congregation brought animals to the church that were then led onto the ark by the children before the rain began on Jan. 21. (Noah led the animals off the ark on Feb. 18.) With the ark are its creators and some of the children: (left side of ark) Colleen Murray, Carolyn, Amanda and Ben Mellish; (right side) Maureen Campbell, Patrick and Jordan Murray; Justin and Cecelia Campbell.



THE 3 Cs LADIES CRAFT GROUP of First Church, Pembroke, Ont., created a quilted wall-hanging as a millennium project. The hanging depicts eight panels from the stained glass windows in the church sanctuary. From left to right are: Fern McComb, Mary Wallace, Janet Carson, Jenny Carmichael, Judy Halliday, Ruby Whyte, Mary Woermke, Marie Nicholson and Heather Connelly. Barbara Gale took the photo.



REV. HEATHER JONES, who works with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Mzuzu, Malawi, presents a cheque from the WMS of Knox Church, Vankleek Hill, Ont., to the Women's Guild of Livingstonia Church. The money will be used to purchase materials for the handicrafts the guild makes and sells. The proceeds are used to support AIDS orphans. Some of the handicrafts involve sewing skills taught by Heather.



EVELYN LENTZ of First Church, Kenora, Ont., shows the bag of 125 pairs of mitts she knitted as her way of recognizing the 125th anniversary of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The mitts were donated to three missions in the Presbytery of Winnipeg — Flora House and Anishinabe Centre in Winnipeg, and Anamiewigummig Centre (House of Prayer) in Kenora.



MADGE EBY, a member of Burns Church, Feversham, Ont., for over 50 years, is joined by Rev. David Gladwell in displaying the rug she designed and hooked as a gift to the congregation. The rug currently hangs on the northwest wall of the sanctuary. Previously, a Westminster Chimes wall clock was presented to Madge's husband, Herb Eby, in recognition of his 45 years of service as an elder and clerk of session.

Please note: Photos submitted for People & Places must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they are to be returned. Also, please try to ensure all pictures are clear and do not include a multitude of people. Colour or black-and-white photos are acceptable, but negatives and slides cannot be used. Thank you.

A DINNER WAS HELD at St. Giles Church, Sarnia, Ont., on Jan. 9 to honour Elaine Heath on her retirement after 25 years as clerk of the Presbytery of Sarnia. Friends and co-workers, past and present, gathered to praise Elaine for her invaluable contribution to the presbytery and to the church. Pictured with her are: her husband, George; son-in-law, Bruce Cameron; daughter, Rev. Jennifer (Heath) Cameron; and grandson, Corey Cameron.





AS PART OF its ongoing preparation for bicentennial celebrations in 2002, the congregation of Drummond Hill Church, Niagara Falls, is restoring a set of unique stained glass windows. One of the newly restored windows was dedicated to the memory of Wilfred and Marion Dewar, longtime members of the church. Shown at the dedication are: the Dewars' son, William; their daughter, Nora; and Rev. Hugh Jones. The congregation also hosted a service of thanksgiving for the city of Niagara Falls, at which the speaker was Sherman Zavitz, the city's official historian.

COLIN AND CATRIONA MITCHELL (nee Dyke) are pictured with their daughter, Isabella Sara Yu Yan, at a celebration held at Alexandra Church, Brantford, Ont., in honour of Sara becoming a Canadian citizen. The Mitchells, who took the first steps to adoption in August 1997, have had the support of the congregation throughout the process. In March 1999, they flew to China to bring their new daughter home.





THE CONGREGATION AND CHURCH SCHOOL of New St. James Church prepare to show the city of London, Ont., the true meaning of Christmas with their entry in the Christmas parade, "Jesus — then — now — and for ever!"



ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., began the celebration of its 100th anniversary on Feb. 3-4, with Rev. Glen Davis, Moderator of the 126th General Assembly, the guest speaker. He is pictured flanked by senior elders (more than 30 years of service each) Alex Robinson (left) and Don Wilson. The anniversary banner in the background depicts the original and current church buildings and includes the names of the church family.

THE CHURCH SCHOOL of Glencoe Church, Glencoe, Ont., presented the play *The True Meaning of Christmas.*





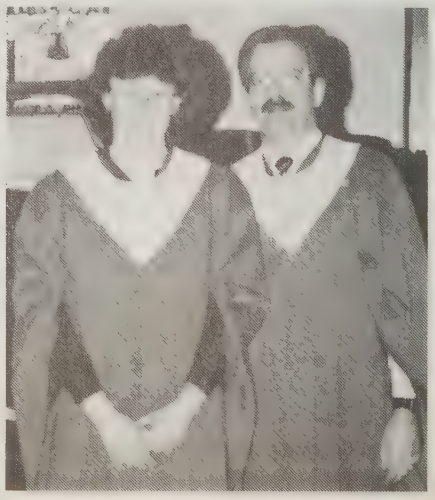
ST. AIDAN'S CHURCH, New Westminster, B.C., celebrated 90 years of faithful witness with a gala dinner and anniversary service attended by many friends and former members. The guest preacher was Rev. Glen Davis, Moderator of the 126th General Assembly. He and his wife, Rev. Joyce Davis, are in the foreground with their son, Rev. Bruce-McAndless Davis, minister of St. Aidan's, and former ministers Jim Hutchison, Larry Jackson and Oliver Nugent.



THE CHURCH SCHOOL CHILDREN of St. Andrew's Church, Trenton, Ont., hold some of the 66 pairs of mittens they collected for the local Christmas Sharing Project.



IT WAS STANDING ROOM ONLY when children and members of Alberton Church, Alberton, Ont., presented the Christmas pageant *Love Came Down* on Christmas Eve.



THE CONGREGATION OF St. Andrew's Church, Campbellford, Ont., thanked Kim Clarke for her ministry of music over the past two years. Although only with St. Andrew's for a short time, Kim made a lasting impression on the congregation. With her is choir director Murray Fischer.



THE YOUTH GROUP of St. Columba Church, Parksville, B.C., and friends presented the play *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, celebrating the birth of Christ and commemorating the creator of *Peanuts*, the late Charles Schulz.



A CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION was presented by clerk of session Trevor Hayden to the Quilters of St. Andrew's Church, Winnipeg, in recognition of their work with Project Linus. Named after the blanket-toting Linus from the comic strip *Peanuts*, Project Linus collects blankets and quilts for distribution to those in need. The St. Andrew's Quilters founded the Manitoba chapter of the charity. To date, they have received almost 700 blankets and quilts from all over the province. Pictured (L to R) are: June McLennan, Helen Smith and Rica Lok. Missing are Lylah Myers and Wynne Snider. (Other women from the congregation who have contributed their knitting skills to the project include Florence Bleich, Faye Crisp, June Dopson, Kay Harbottle, Aileen Huss and Dorothy Lindblom.)



A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING was held at Knox Church, Guelph, Ont., Jan. 14, to mark the successful completion of the Knox 2000 Capital Campaign, a five-year campaign in which $905,000 was raised — $155,000 more than the original target. Pictured, guest speaker Rev. Zander Dunn, former minister of Knox, is joined by Rev. Thomas Kay, who succeeded him as senior minister at Knox.

MABEL PEDERSEN of St. John's Church, Medicine Hat, Alta., admires a portrait presented to her on her retirement (at age 88) after 34 years as church organist. An evening of songs and skits attended by 175 people paid tribute to Mabel's contributions to St. John's and to the community.





THE WOMEN OF St. Paul's Church, Simcoe, Ont., are seen "Fanning the FLAMES" at their retreat held at Crieff Hills, Puslinch, Ont. Rev. Mark Lewis was the guest speaker.

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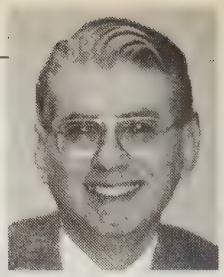
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you were asking?

Tony Plomp



Seeking God's confirmation

question: *Sometimes, when faced with a difficult decision, I look for a sign from God. Is that foolish? Should I simply use the brain God has given me, make a decision and get on with it?*

All of us are making decisions all the time. Often, we do so almost solely on the basis of intuition, prior training and common sense. Driving a car safely involves innumerable decisions, and the better our previous training and experience the safer we and our passengers will be. We do not spend much time looking for "signs from God" when driving our car. Common sense can tell us a lot about how to drive a car safely.

Sometimes, however, there are puzzling and perplexing situations that arise when we do not readily know what to do. Then, I believe, we need to follow a sound process for decision-making.

Reliance on "signs from God" is an unsound, subjective process. It can easily turn into superstitious behaviour — such as closing one's eyes, opening up the Bible and letting one's finger fall on a certain part of the text. The story is often told about the man who followed this procedure when he had a dilemma to resolve. The first thing he read was, "Judas hanged himself." He did not think this was a good word from the Lord, so he repeated the procedure. This time, his finger landed on the text, "Go, do thou likewise."

If you are always looking for "signs from God," you may never do anything.

I believe there is a process that commends itself to Christians. First, we should seriously commit the matter for decision to the Lord in prayer. We should ask for God's wisdom, for sound thinking and for the Spirit's guidance.

Secondly, we should ask ourselves if everything we know of the Word of God, the Bible, can shed some light on the problem we are facing and the decision we must make. For instance, when we find ourselves in personal conflict with someone, the Bible has some things to say about this and how to go about seeking resolution to the conflict (Matthew 18:15ff).

If you are always looking for "signs from God," you may never do anything

Thirdly, we should consult with others whom we trust and in whom we have confidence. Listen carefully to what they have to say. Most of us, when we seek advice, seek confirmation of a decision we have already made. We should be willing, however, to consider views other than our own. A truly good friend will try to be honest with us and not simply confirm us in a decision made previously.

When faced with a difficult decision, we should use the brain God has given us, commit matters to God in prayer, consult with others and, then, make the decision and "get on with it," confident that we have done the best we could and trusting God to confirm us in our decision. R

Please send questions for Rev. Tony Plomp to tony_plomp@telus.net or 4020 Lancelot Dr., Richmond, B.C. V7C 4S3.

God Details *by Audrey Cameron (Essence, 2000, $15). Reviewed by Shaun Seaman.*

Some of us seek to become aware that we are in the presence of God when we enter into a magnificent cathedral. Some of us seek to become aware that we are in the presence of God as we sit on the shores of a quiet lake and enjoy the eerie call of the loon. Some of us miss the presence of the Beloved in the busy, or challenging, or joyous, or mundane moments of daily life.

On the back cover of this beautiful little treasury of stories, aptly titled *God Details*, are these words: "In the ordinary moments of life, God captures our attention with His care and delight in details." Through beautifully simple life events, Audrey Cameron has put into words the reality of the presence of God's grace, hope, joy and love in ways that surprise, awaken and enliven the soul. Whether it is the untimely interruption by a friend in need, the innocence of a child's wonder, the loving gift of a yellow china cup, the snap of a Communion wafer in the still air or saying farewell to a friend and mentor, Audrey's clean, clear reflections on the events of her day inspire us to reflect on how God is present with us all, in all the things that fill our moments.

For times of devotion, or study and teaching, or sermon illustrations, or even for those times in the day when the thirsty soul needs a cool drink of living water, this is the tiny companion to have nearby. Audrey's well-chosen words remind us not only of God's love for his children, but that God is closer than we even dare to dream.

Audrey writes, "This book has been born from a time of waiting and watching." It is an invitation and a guide to help you to do the same and to be blessed by it. *God Details* is a gift from the heart and is certain to touch yours.

Audrey is on the staff of St. Andrew's Church, Kitchener, Ontario.

Shaun Seaman is minister of Trinity Church in Kanata, Ont.

The Way of the Cross: The Path to the Resurrection *by Harris Athanasiadis (St. Mark's Presbyterian Church, Don Mills, Ont., 2001, $10 at church). Reviewed by Arthur Van Seters.*

In this series of 81 short meditations, a pastor seeks to help a congregation be engaged by the Gospel of Mark. Taking a few verses at a time, Harris Athanasiadis, minister of St. Mark's Church in Don Mills, Ontario, combines reflection on the biblical text with an invitation to let one's personal experience be questioned by that text, ending with a prayer of response.

So the wilderness in Mark 1:10-13 is a metaphor for a place of interior struggle. The reader is encouraged to invite God into the troubled places of life. We are then helped to pray, "Lord God, give me a greater capacity to trust you in my time of testing ... " Bit by bit, we read the text, ponder some of its issues and personally relate to the unfolding journey of Jesus to the cross and resurrection.

This is a personal, spiritual odyssey, which turns out to be both its strength and its limitation. The biblical text is taken seriously as Scripture that can shape our lives as followers of Jesus Christ. But the Gospel tends to be diminished as something between me and Jesus. This is certainly not what Athanasiadis intends, but the personal questions focus us inward on our spiritual relationship with God and we miss much of the larger drama of the story. So the Kingdom of God is described as "a spiritual place that will keep us safe and secure," which it is; but the Kingdom is also about God's new order that calls for risk. In Mark's Gospel, the breaking in of this order is full of conflict, including among the disciples. One misses much of this when the story is atomized into small units and read meditatively in the way encouraged here.

At the same time, the invitation to read personally and spiritually is deeply moving and helpful. For example, the prayer following some thoughts and questions on Mark 3:7-12 invites us to be liberated from our preconceptions and presuppositions in order to hear what God has to say to us in a way different from ever before. One feels this journey to the cross most poignantly in the meditations on Mark 14 and 15, especially the treatment of the scene of Jesus praying in Gethsemane. We need this kind of encouragement to follow Christ to the cross. We also need help seeing the cross as central to the transformation of human history (which Jesus made so clear in this very Gospel).

Arthur Van Seters is a former Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and former principal of Vancouver School of Theology and Knox College, Toronto.

The Geometry of Love: Space, Time, Mystery, and Meaning in an Ordinary Church *by Margaret Visser (Harper, 2000, $35). Reviewed by Arthur Van Seters.*

It will seem unexpected to commend to Presbyterians an elaborate account of a Roman Catholic church just outside the walls of Rome unless you have read one of Margaret Visser's earlier works or heard her interviewed on the CBC. The Church of Sant'Agnese fuori le Mura is no ordinary church despite the subtitle of this remarkable volume, The Geometry of Love. It is not only the stretch of 17 centuries of its history or the imaginative reconstruction of its architecture, murals, furnishings, etc., that draw the reader into the place with marvellous vividness (though a floor plan drawing would have added immeasurably to the tour she conducts).

What is astonishing is the depth of Visser's knowledge of the Bible and church history as well as the depth of her theological reflections. The journey becomes a personal, spiritually refreshing odyssey. She probes the meaning of baptism, the Lord's Supper, attitudes of prayer and what Christians might mean

by the word *epiphany*. One of Visser's singular gifts is exploring the root meanings of words and their evolution; this book is full of examples. All these references are clear and accessible to anyone who might pick up this work out of aesthetic or some other curiosity.

This church has obviously been named after some ancient figure called Agnes. It turns out she was martyred at the age of 12 (presumably as a virgin), probably on January 21, 303, because she chose to follow Christ rather than commit idolatry in response to the edict of Emperor Diocletian. The story draws us back into the Early Church at the transition from a long period of being a persecuted minority to becoming recognized as the official church of the Empire. Visser introduces us to the whole tradition of Christian burial in the catacombs under Rome, the recognition of martyrs as saints and the meaning of virginity in that culture (with a critique by Augustine). Many other aspects of the evolution of Roman Catholic symbols that will seem particularly strange to Presbyterians are explained. The result is a deepened appreciation of another branch of the Christian Church critically examined and simply explained by an insider. Now, if only she had added a listing of her Bible references to her extensive index, it would be, well, close to perfect!

The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christians Can Reach the West … Again *by George H. Hunter III (Abingdon, $19.95). Reviewed by Wayne A. Holst.*

When the first European missionaries arrived on North American shores 500 years ago, they came with a charge to "Christianize" and "civilize" the "heathen" populations they encountered. That mandate had been part of European Christianity's self-understanding for more than a thousand years. Following what is now described as the Roman model, Christian leaders — both Catholic and Protestant — assumed that civilization and Christianity went hand in hand.

Protestants may still argue that the Reformation broke them free from Roman tyranny. Yet, even as we enter the 21st century, Euro-North American Christianity (to which mainline, Canadian Protestantism is strongly related) remains committed to what is essentially an exclusivist Roman way of viewing itself as being the church.

George Hunter III, of the School of World Mission at Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky, rejects this and proposes an alternative, "inclusivist" and "Celtic-styled" approach. We are at a time in history, he says, when the Roman way no longer works.

Celtic Christianity was a home-grown version of the Christian faith. It was the first indigenous Christian movement in Ireland, planted deep within its soil during the fifth century by St. Patrick. Instead of "converting" the pagan Irish into something they were not, he helped them become more truly Celtic, but in a Christian way. This principle of "contextualizing" the faith was then extended by Irish Celtic Christians who made pilgrimages eastward to convert the Picts of Scotland, the Anglo-Saxons of England and other "Barbarians" encountered on the continent. Using this method, Celtic Christianity was able to re-evangelize much of neo-pagan Europe.

Back home, however, the Celtic Christian movement was trumped by resurgent Roman Christianity in the mid-seventh century. Since that time, inclusivist Celtic ways declined while exclusivist Roman approaches reasserted themselves.

Hunter believes Christianity today faces many of the same neo-pagan challenges St. Patrick and his followers encountered in Ireland and Europe 1,500 years ago. He prescribes similar approaches to renewal, in modern form, that Celtic Christians practised before they were overtaken by Roman Christianity.

The author outlines five proven Celtic church practices he believes are necessary today. We need to: move from "lone ranger" to partnership forms of ministry, create "neo-monastic church communities" as places of formation for modern Christians, develop imaginative/contemplative prayer patterns, practise open and full hospitality as our primary response to those who come seeking, and rediscover that belonging comes before believing for those new to the faith.

The Irish reflected a right-brained temperament while the Romans honoured left-brain characteristics. The Celts responded to a faith that told stories, stirred the imagination and was Spirit-led. They were not much attracted by rational Roman Christian words, propositions, theological abstractions and apologetics.

Hunter maintains that, as in Europe a millennium and a half ago, New Barbarians have resurfaced in western nations like Canada. These are secular folk who possess little or no Christian awareness. As post-moderns, they are suspicious of left-brained, authoritarian institutions that claim ultimate authority over their lives and final answers to their questions. Like the pagan Celts before St. Patrick arrived in Ireland, these secularists seem to be unreachable. That is not so, however, and the author presents examples to demonstrate his point. While the antiquated Roman model of the church would encourage us to present the message, call for a decision and then welcome people into our fellowship, the Celtic model calls us to reach out first to establish fellowship where people are; engage these new audiences in conversation and action; and, only then, with time and trust, invite them to belief and commitment.

Hunter's book profoundly challenges traditionally held understandings of how the church should engage the contemporary world. He maintains that, far from being a dead tradition, Celtic Christianity can resurface in winsome, workable ways for people today.

Wayne A. Holst is an instructor in religion and culture at the University of Calgary.

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DEATHS

MacSWEEN, REV. DR. ALEXANDER JOSEPH DONALD FERGUSON, died peacefully in Victoria, B.C., in his 89th year. Born to deeply religious parents, Rev. Peter MacSween and Flora (MacInnes) MacSween, April 7, 1912, in Glasgow, Scotland, Alex immigrated to Opal, Alberta, with his parents and brother in 1919. They resided there for two years while his father completed his theological course in Edmonton. Schooled in Alberta and Saskatchewan, Alex graduated from the Regina Normal School in 1931. In 1935, he received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Saskatchewan and, in 1938, graduated in theology from Knox College, Toronto. He married Mary (Marie) Dorothy Campbell of Pouce Coupe, B.C., October 12, 1938.

Alex was a builder, beginning his ministry to pioneer congregations in Saskatchewan (Indian Head, Meath Park, Carraganna), in Alberta (Spirit River, Blueberry Mountain) and British Columbia (Riverside near Pouce Coupe, Highridge and Fort St. John). He was ordained into the ministry by his father in the Old Kildonan Presbyterian Church in 1938. His first charge was at Wanham, Alberta, also serving congregations in Blueberry Mountain, Heart Valley, Prestville, Gordonville and Dixonville.

Leaving Wanham in 1941, he moved to Prince Rupert, B.C. With the outbreak of war in the Pacific, he served not only his own congregation but also ministered to Canadian and American troops bound for the Aleutian campaign and the Southwest Pacific in WWII. He moved to St. James in Melfort, Saskatchewan, in 1947 and on to Kamloops, B.C., in 1951. While serving St. Andrew's, Kamloops, he was instrumental in the re-establishment of congregations at Kelowna, the establishment of congregations at Prince George and Kitimat, and saw the construction of the new church sanctuary for his home congregation. He led the presbytery in the establishment of a church camp at Little Shuswap Lake. He was a founding member of the board of St. Andrew's Hall, UBC, in Vancouver, B.C. One of Alex's proudest and most satisfying achievements was the establishment of Hungarian, Korean and Chinese language congregations in B.C.

He undertook the duties of superintendent of missions for Manitoba and Northern Ontario in 1962; then, in 1966, accepted an appointment as Assistant Secretary of the General Board of Missions, Toronto, becoming the Canada secretary of the Board of World Mission in 1973. He was honoured with the Centennial Medal of Canada "in recognition of valuable service to the Nation July 1, 1967." Alex was elected Moderator of the 106th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1980. While Moderator, he visited congregations across Canada and mission fields in Taiwan, Japan and India. In 1982, Alex and Marie retired to Saanichton, in their beloved British Columbia.

During his career, Alex travelled widely across Canada, giving much needed aid and encouragement to church outreach and building programs. The Presbyterian Church in Canada honoured him in 1977 with a Doctor of Divinity degree (*honoris causa*) in recognition of his leadership and faithful service.

His faith was profound, his oratory skilled, his organizational and management abilities prodigious. He is, however, best remembered dressed in his usual shirt and tie, with his sleeves rolled up, a hammer and apron nearby, encouraging volunteers in the construction of his life's work.

Somebody said that it couldn't be done
but he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't" but he would
be one
Who wouldn't say so till he tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace
of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done and he did it! ...

Edgar A. Guest

He never could lay down his skills in retirement, and continued his interest in and concern for the growth of the church to the end of his life.

Predeceased by his father and mother, Alex is survived by his loving wife, Marie, of Victoria, B.C.; his brother, Rev. Ian P. (Willena) MacSween, of Red Deer, Alta.; son Donald (Bonalin) of Saanichton, B.C.; daughters Joyce MacSween of Victoria and Sheila (Gordon) Newlands of Summerland, B.C.; grandchildren Verna MacSween of Victoria, B.C.; Capt. Peter (Patty) MacSween of Geilenkirchen-Tripsrath, Germany; Gordon Newlands of Calgary, Alta.; Robyn (Anthony) Cegielnik of Calgary, Alta.; numerous nieces, nephews and their families; and by his many valued friends.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Alex's name to The Presbyterian Church in Canada Extension and Building Fund, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ont. M3C 1J7.

MILLER, REV. DR. FREDERICK A., on January 31, 2001, in Owen Sound, Ont., after a long battle with cancer.

Fred was born on April 30, 1923, in Belfast, Northern Ireland, son of Alexander and Jean Miller. As a teenager, he worked in his father's interior decorating shop. When the Second World War broke out, he joined the RAF, taking part of his training in Canada.

Following his retirement from the RAF, Fred felt the call to ministry. In 1948, he returned to Canada and served as a student minister in the Presbyterian church in Wanham, Alberta. From there, he went to Edmonton where he served as assistant minister to Dr. MacBeath Miller of First Presbyterian Church. While in Edmonton, Fred attended Alberta College to complete his high school. He then attended Carleton University in Ottawa, receiving his BA. While in Ottawa, he served as stated supply in the combined charges of Gloucester and Vernon, Ont., as well as Westminster, Ottawa, where a new church building was commenced.

Fred then began studies in the theology program of The Presbyterian College, McGill University, in Montreal. While there, he served two years as stated supply at the Morewood, Chesterville and Dunbar pastoral charge. During his third year, Fred served at St. Edward's in Beauharnois, PQ. He was ordained and inducted into the ministry there on May 16, 1956.

In 1960, Fred accepted a call to St. Andrew's, Owen Sound. He served there until his retirement in 1988. He received a Doctor of Divinity (*honoris causa*) in 1981 from The Presbyterian College. Shortly after retirement, Fred opened a counselling and consulting practice in Owen Sound where he worked until ill health in 1999 caused him to close it down.

Fred leaves to mourn his passing: Ethel, his devoted wife for over 50 years; his son David (Beatrice) of Owen Sound; his daughter Jean of Calgary; son James (Sherry) of Hepworth, Ont.; grandsons Kris, Patrick, George, Brendan, Lucas and Brett; sister Mabel Dundee (Harold) of Northern Ireland; brother Samuel (Rosemary) in England. He will be missed by nieces and nephews in England and Ireland. He was predeceased by his son George and his parents. •

"Well done, good and faithful servant."

The Transitions column welcomes announcements of special events such as births, marriages, anniversaries, graduations, baptisms and the reception of new members, as well as death notices. The rate is $1 per word or $50 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.
All notices of pulpit vacancies, recognitions, ordinations and inductions will be charged to the congregation: $10 for the basic notice and $1 per word for additional information. (There will be no charge to congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.)
Contact the *Record* office regarding all items for the Transitions column.

DALGLEISH, DENNIS, 45, member and elder at Caledonia, Ont., Feb. 20, 2001.

KERR, DOROTHY (JACKSON), died April 10, 2001. Devoted member of Knox Presbyterian Church, Sudbury, Ont. WMS honorary life member and elder. We are grateful for her contributions to her church and community.

PATTERSON, GORDON, 86, member and elder at Caledonia, Ont., Jan. 20, 2001.

PRINGLE, HARVEY, 81, treasured member, served on board of managers of St. Andrew's, Burks Falls, Ont. Passed away after a battle with cancer, April 18, 2001. Sadly missed by his wife and family and his church family.

INDUCTIONS and RECOGNITIONS

Carle, Rev. Nancy, Riverside, Windsor, Ont., May 17, 2001.

Odland, Rev. Dr. Lance, Weston Church, Weston, Ont., Nov. 26, 2000.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES and INTERIM MODERATORS

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Bass River, N.B., pastoral charge. Rev. Ralph MacKenzie, 106 Notre Dame, Atholville, N.B. E3N 3Z3.

Bathurst, N.B., St. Luke's. Rev. John Crawford, 7 Hierlihy Rd., Tabusintac, N.B. E9H 1Y5.

Charlottetown, Zion (assistant minister). Rev. Steven Stead, RR 4, Montague, P.E.I. C0A 1R0.

Glace Bay, N.S., St. Paul's. Rev. Robert Lyle, 12 Lorway Ave., Sydney, N.S. B1P 4Z2; 902-564-4001; rdarjlyle@email.msn.com.

Hanwell (Fredericton), N.B., St. James. Rev. Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1M2; 506-455-8220; sapc@nbnet.nb.ca.

Merigomish, N.S., St. Paul's; French River. Rev. Charles McPherson, Box 132, Stellarton, N.S. B0K 1S0.

Miramichi, N.B., St. James. Rev. Philip Crowell, 206 Wellington St., Miramichi, N.B. E1N 1M7.

Montague, P.E.I., St. Andrew's; Cardigan, St. Andrew's. Rev. Roger MacPhee, Belfast Post Office, Belfast, P.E.I. C0A 1A0.

New Glasgow, N.S., St. Andrew's. Rev. Iona MacLean, Box 1003, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0; ionamac@auracom.com; 902-485-4298.

Riverview, N.B., Bethel. Rev. Martin Kreplin, 90 Park St., Moncton, N.B. E1C 2B3.

Saint John, N.B., St. Columba. Rev. Ted Thompson, 101 Coburg St., Saint John, N.B. E2L 3B7; 506-634-7765.

Scotsburn, N.S., Bethel; Earltown, Knox; West Branch, Burns Memorial. Rev. Jeanette Fleischer, Box 142, River John, N.S. B0K 1N0; 902-351-2777; jen.fleisch@ns.sympatico.ca.

Springhill, N.S., St. David's; Oxford, St. James; Riverview, St. Andrew's. Rev. Kevin Steeper, RR 2, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0; 902-485-8944; thesteepers@auracom.com.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Fort-Coulonge, Que., St. Andrew's; Bristol, Bristol Memorial. Rev. Milton A. Fraser, 80 Daniel St. N, Arnprior, Ont. K7S 2K8; 613-623-5531; standrew@storm.ca.

Kemptville, Ont., St. Paul's; Oxford Mills, St. Andrew's. Rev. Dr. William Klempa, 155 Ch. Lac Louisa N, Wentworth, Que. J8H 3W8; 450-533-5321; wklemp@po-box.mcgill.ca.

Melbourne, Que., St. Andrew's. Rev. Ross Davidson, 702 rue Lafontaine, Thetford Mines, Que. G6G 3J6; jrhdavidson@globetrotter.net.

Montreal, Cote Des Neiges. Rev. Dr. Clyde Ervine, The Presbyterian College, 3495 University St., Montreal, Que. H3A 2A8.

Montreal, Robert Campbell Taiwanese (half-time, English/Taiwanese bilingual assistant). Rev. Harry Kuntz, 92 Rockwyn Ave., Pointe Claire, Que. H9R 1W2.

Morrisburg, Ont., Knox; Dunbar, Dunbar Church. Rev. Mark Bourgon, PO Box 220, Finch, Ont., K0C 1K0; 613-984-0772; mbourgon@glen-net.ca.

Nepean, Ont., Parkwood. Rev. J.H.W. Statham, 1220 Old Tenth Line Rd., Orleans, Ont. K1E 3W7.

Ottawa, Westminster. Rev. Alex Mitchell, 2400 Alta Vista Dr., Ottawa, Ont. K1H 7N1.

Pierrefonds, Que., Westminster (part-time). Mr. Elias Saikaly, 4373 Elgin, Pierrefonds, Que. H9H 1T9; e_saikaly@hotmail.com.

Smiths Falls, Ont., Westminster. Rev. Milton A. Fraser, 80 Daniel St. N, Arnprior, Ont. K7S 2K8; 613-623-5531; standrew@storm.ca.

Synod of Toronto and Kingston

Ajax, St. Andrew's. Rev. E.J. Briard, 255 Wright Cres., Ajax, Ont. L1S 5S5.

Ajax, St. Timothy's. Rev. Phillip Robillard, 447 Port Union Rd., Toronto, Ont. M1C 2L6; philrob@grace.on.ca; fax 416-284-8560.

Cambridge, Central. Rev. Mark Richardson, 10 Zeller Dr., Kitchener, Ont. N2A 4A8; kepc@golden.net.

Cambridge, St. Andrew's Hespeler. Rev. Wayne Dawes, 2 Grand Ave. S, Cambridge, Ont. N1S 2L2.

Cambridge, St. Giles. Rev. Linda Ashfield, 50 Erb St. W, Waterloo, Ont. N2L 1T1; ashfield@nonline.net.

Campbellville, St. David's; Nassagaweya (half-time associate minister at Nassagaweya). Rev. Ian McWhinnie, 3535 South Common Ct., Mississauga, Ont. L5L 2B3; 905-820-9860; ian.mcwhinnie@sympatico.ca.

Colborne, Old St. Andrew's; Brighton, St. Andrew's. Rev. Doug Brown, 200 King St. W, Cobourg, Ont. K9A 2N1.

Crieff, Knox (half-time). Rev. Thomas J. Kay, 20 Quebec St., Guelph, Ont. N1H 2T4; thomas@knoxguelph.ca.

Etobicoke, Mimico. Rev. Susanne Rescorl, 680 Annette St., Toronto, Ont. M6S 2C8; 416-767-2689; fax 416-767-1229.

Fenelon Falls, St. Andrew's; Glenarm, Knox. Rev. Doug Scott, RR 1, 22 Hillview Dr., Bobcaygeon, Ont. K0M 1A0.

Fergus, St. Andrew's. Rev. Linda Bell, 2 Cross St., Elmira, Ont. N3B 2S4; drbell@execulink.com.

Guelph, St. Andrew's. Rev. William Johnston, 54 Queen St. N, Kitchener, Ont. N2H 2H2.

Maple, St. Andrew's. Rev. Bryn MacPhail, Box 164, 19 Stewart St., Beeton, Ont. L0G 1A0; 905-729-0055; bmacphal@netrover.com.

Markham, Chapel Place. Rev. George Beals, 10058 Yonge St., Richmond Hill, Ont. L4C 1T8. Potential candidates must have an intimate knowledge of Middle Eastern culture and be thoroughly fluent in Arabic and English.

Nobleton, St. Paul's. Rev. Sam Priestley, 143 Main St. N, Markham, Ont. L3P 1Y2.

Orillia, Orillia (St. Andrew's), (effective Sept./Oct. 2001). Rev. Donald McKillican, 99 Peter St. N, Orillia, Ont. L3V 4Z3.

Orillia, St. Mark's. Rev. Carey Nieuwhof, RR 1, Comp. 126, Hawkestone, Ont. L0L 1T0; cnieuwhof@trinitycommunity.org; 705-487-1998.

Oshawa, Knox. Rev. Lois Whitwell, The Search Committee, 147 Simcoe St. N, Oshawa, Ont. L1J 4S6; gorddi@durham.net.

Port Carling, Knox; Torrance, Zion. Rev. Michael Barnes, 45 McMurray St., Bracebridge, Ont. P1L 2A1; 705-645-4521.

Puslinch, Duff's. Rev. Don McCallum, 795 Scottsdale Dr., Guelph, Ont. N1G 3R8.

Scarborough, Clairlea Park (part time). Rev. Dr. Ian Clark, 3236 St. Clair Ave. E, Toronto, Ont. M1L 1V7.

Scarborough, Westminster. Rev. Wallace Whyte, 20 Guildwood Pkwy. #1104, Toronto, Ont. M1E 5B6; w.g.whyte@sympatico.ca.

Toronto, Calvin. Rev. G. Cameron Brett, 75 Simcoe St., Toronto, Ont. M5J 1W9; cbrett@standrewstoronto.org.

Toronto, Malvern. Rev. Duncan Cameron, 115 St. Andrews Rd., Toronto, Ont. M1P 4N2; d.cameron@sympatico.ca.

Toronto, Patterson. Rev. Gordon Fish, 15 Lambeth Rd., Toronto, Ont. M9A 2Y6.

Toronto, St. Giles Kingsway. Rev. John Borthwick, 2314 Islington Ave., Toronto, Ont. M9W 5W9; 416-741-1530; barley.is@home.com.

Toronto, Toronto Korean (full-time associate minister in charge of English-speaking ministry). Rev. Cheol Soon Park, 67 Scarsdale Rd., North York, Ont. M3B 2R2; 416-447-5963.

Toronto, Westminster. Rev. Nicholas Athanasiadis, 670 Eglinton Ave. E, Toronto, Ont. M4G 2K4; nathans@idirect.ca.

Tweed, St. Andrew's. Rev. A.D. MacLeod, 16 Marmora St., Trenton, Ont. K8V 2H5.

Unionville, Unionville Church. Rev. Robert Smith, 271 Centre St., Thornhill, Ont. L4J 1G5; tpchurch@aims.on.ca.

Uptergrove, Knox; East Oro, Essen; Jarratt, Willis. Rev. Tim Purvis, Box 26, Stayner, Ont. L0M 1S0; seraph@sympatico.ca.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Amherstburg, St. Andrew's. Rev. Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland Ave., Windsor,

Ont. N9E 1Z5; 519-972-3627.
Appin, Appin Church; Melbourne, Guthrie. Rev. Brian Nichol, RR 1, Dutton, Ont. N0L 1J0; 519-762-3724; revrev@webgate.net.
Beamsville, St. Andrew's; Smithville. Rev. Donna J. Riseborough, 202-2 Ferndale Ave., St. Catharines, Ont. L2P 3X8; driseborough@sympatico.ca.
Beechwood, St. Andrew's; Centre Road, Knox; Kerwood, West Adelaide. Rev. Kristine O'Brien, 152 Albert St., Strathroy, Ont. N7G 1V5; kristine@golden.net.
Chatham, St. James. Rev. Ian McDonald, 60 Fifth St., Chatham, Ont. N7M 4V7; 519-352-2313; i.mcdonald@sympatico.ca.
London, Elmwood Avenue. Rev. Andrew Human, 55 Hincks St., St. Thomas, Ont. N5R 3N9; revhuman@execulink.com.
Milverton, Burns; North Mornington. Search Committee, 66 Main St. N, Milverton, Ont. N0K 1M0.
Monkton, Knox; Cranbrook, Knox. Rev. Peter Bush, Box 235, Mitchell, Ont. N0K 1N0; 519-348-9080; knoxmit@quadro.net.
Petrolia, St. Andrew's; Dawn, Knox. Rev. Philip Wilson, PO Box 1381, Corunna, Ont. N0N 1G0.
Point Edward, Point Edward Church (part-time). Rev. James Sloan, 268 Dantiki Ct., Corunna, Ont. N0N 1G0.
Priceville, St. Andrew's (half-time). Rev. Scott Sinclair, 865 Second Ave. W, Owen Sound, Ont. N4K 4M6.
Stratford, Knox. Rev. Rick Horst, PO Box 247, St. Marys, Ont. N4X 1B1.
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Windsor, Chinese (Cantonese-speaking, part-time). Rev. Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9E 1Z5.
Windsor, Minister to begin a new outreach project near the University of Windsor. Rev. Hugh Appèl, Convener, Knox Presbyterian Church, 251 Duncan at Wellington, Wallaceburg, Ont. N8A 5G5; knox@kent.net.
Wyoming, St. Andrew's; Camlachie, Knox. Rev. Raymond Hodgson, 261 N. Christina St., Sarnia, Ont. N7T 5V4; 519-332-2662; raymond.hodgson@sympatico.ca.

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Carberry, Man., Knox-Zion. Rev. Gladys Anderson, Box 553, Neepawa, Man. R0J 1H0; fax 204-476-5387; gmander@escape.ca.
Flin Flon, Man., St. Andrew's (full-time ordained minister with interest in developing a centre for rural and remote ministries). Rev. Dale Woods, 339-12th St., Brandon, Man. R7A 4M3; phone 204-727-5874; fax 204-728-7037; fpc@escape.ca.
Fort Frances, Ont., St. Andrew's. Rev. Bert Vancook, 207 South Brodie St., Thunder Bay, Ont. P7E 1C1; presby1@baynet.net.
Kenora, Ont., First. Rev. Beth M. McCutcheon, 1476 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Man. R3G 0W3.
Thunder Bay, Ont., Calvin. Rev. Mark McLennan, 635 Grey St., Thunder Bay, Ont. P7E 2E4; markmac@lakehead.net.
Winnipeg, First. Rev. Brenda Fraser, 2373 Main St., Winnipeg, Man. R2V 4T6; 204-339-3502; kpresbyc@pangea.ca.
Winnipeg, St. Andrew's-Calvin (joint charge seeking full-time minister). Rev. John Hogerwaard, 341 Eveline St. at McLean Ave., Selkirk, Man. R1A 1M9; 204-482-6425.

Synod of Saskatchewan

Swift Current, St. Andrew's (part-time). Rev. Andrew Apack Song, Box 1295, Moose Jaw, Sask. S6H 4P9; apackson@home.com.
Yorkton, Knox; Dunleath. Rev. Deborah Lannon, 2170 Albert St., Regina, Sask. S4P 2T9; dalfor@dlcwest.com.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Calgary, St. Andrew's (co-minister, special responsibilities for youth, young adults, pastoral care). Rev. Kirk Summers, 290 Edgepark Blvd. NW, Calgary, Alta. T3A 4H4; 403-241-1443; ksummers@cadvision.com.
Calgary, Varsity Acres (co-minister). Rev. Dianne Ollerenshaw, 344 Coach Ridge Rise SW, Calgary, Alta. T3H 1G1; ollerend@cadvision.com; Web site: www.cadvision.com/vapc.
Medicine Hat, Riverside. Rev. Fiona Wilkinson, Box 566, Bassano, Alta. T0J 0B0; fax 403-641-4091; fiona@eidnet.org.
Medicine Hat, St. John's (interim minister to begin Sept. 1). Rev. Dr. Roy Gellatly, 1306 13th Ave. S, Lethbridge, Alta. T1K 0R5; gellat-r@agt.net.
North Peace Territorial Ministry. Rev. Shirley Cochrane, PO Box 37, Wanham, Alta. T0H 3P0; 780-694-2185; scochran@telusplanet.net.

Synod of British Columbia

Burnaby, Gordon. Rev. Guy Sinclair, 2597 Bourquin Cres. E, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1Y6.
Castlegar, Grace. Rev. Doug Johns, Box 255, Creston, B.C. V0B 1G0; johnsy@kootenay.com.
Nanaimo, St. Andrew's. Rev. Robert Kerr, 921 Wembley Rd., Parksville, B.C. V9P 2E6; rajpkerr@home.com.
New Westminster, Knox. Rev. Dr. J.H. (Hans) Kouwenberg, 2597 Bourquin Cres. E, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1Y6; calvinpresb@telus.net.
Vancouver, Central. Rev. Bruce McAndless-Davis, 1320 7th Ave., New Westminster, B.C. V3M 2K1; 604-526-4914; fax 604-543-7597; bruce@staidans.bc.ca.
Vancouver, Chinese (associate minister for English-language service). Rev. Robert Allison, 1179 Cloverley St., North Vancouver, B.C. V7L 1N7; fax 604-988-4773.

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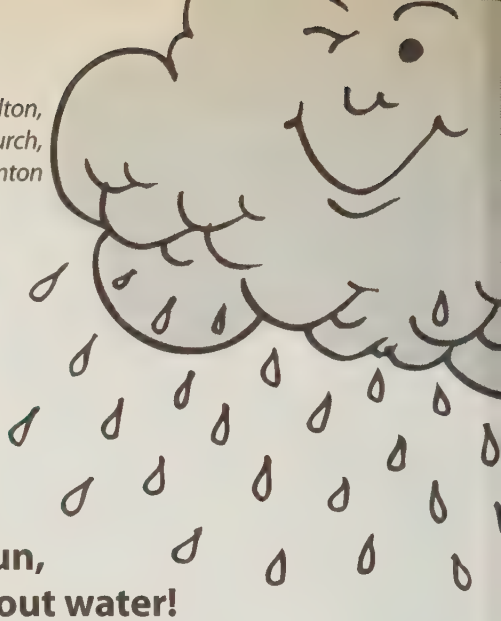
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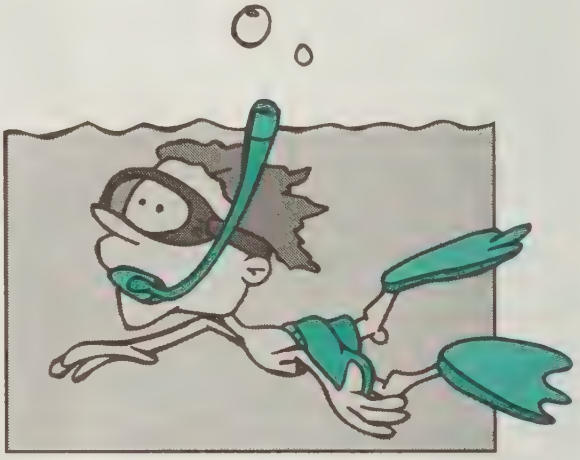
Written by Erin Walton, youth minister, First Church, Edmonton



Summertime is a lot of fun!
Rain in the summer isn't much fun,
but summer wouldn't be the same without water!
Think of summer fun that involves water.

Try to match the following pairs by joining a word from the left column with a word from the right column.

Snorkel	Board
Boat	Seeds
Fishing	Towel
Swimming	Hose
Beach	Stick
Diving	Flippers
Popsicle	Rod
Watermelon	Lifejacket
Sprinkler	Bathing suit





Think of some famous Bible stories involving water.
Now try to match the following parts of famous Bible stories.

Noah	Red Sea
Jonah	Walking on water
Moses	Ark
Jesus	Big fish

Do you ever wonder where water comes from?
Do you ever wonder who controls the sea?

Dear God,
We know only you have the power to control the sea. Thanks for creating lakes, rivers and even rain clouds to give us water, in the summer and all year long!
Amen.

Link to more "called to wonder" activities online at:
www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html

Joan Cruickshank

A hospice love story

No flowers, no fancy wedding party, no church with a centre aisle — only a group of loving family members gathered around a lounge chair in a hospice bedroom

To have the privilege of being a nurse in a cancer hospice, where people live in peace and dignity until their lives are over, is something I thank God for every day. Our Rosedale Hospice in Calgary is a quiet, peaceful haven where cancer patients and their loved ones can spend time together at a most precious time of life.

"Midwives to the Dying" is a term that describes what we do. All the love and care and attention that goes to the family and the newborn at the beginning of life is deserved by the family and the patient at the end of life. This is what hospice nurses do so well.

Even though we are not affiliated with any religious organization, the spiritual journey of our patients and their families is an important facet of hospice care. Our chapel is a beautiful room where, when the sun shines through the stained glass window, the whole carpet takes on its colours. It is a comfortable, peaceful area to rest, meditate and pray.

Staff often comment that God has his hand in every room of our hospice. Too many unexplainable things happen to think otherwise. We keep a journal of stories that happen here. As I read and reread them, I feel grateful to be part of this wonderful place. The following story is one that touches my heart, especially because I was the nurse privileged to be part of the experience.

Two people in love, devoted to one another and wanting to be married. Does this sound unusual? Not at all. But, in this case, the bride-to-be was a patient here at hospice, dying of a cancer she had tried to fight for more than a year. The prospective groom was a caring and compassionate young man who, more than anything, wanted to be her husband.

The wedding had been planned for late summer but, as the illness progressed, the ceremony had been pushed ahead several times. In late June, the bride-to-be was admitted to Rosedale when her family was no longer able to provide the specialized care she needed.

God has his hand in every room of our hospice

The early July day was beautiful, and the evening turned out to be the same — warm and still, with only a hint of a gentle breeze. When I started my shift at 8 p.m., our patient was not doing well. She could no longer lie in her bed and found comfort only when sitting in the lounge chair in her room. Her family kept vigil.

By 10 p.m., her condition had deteriorated. Her fiancé, realizing the end was near, wanted the wedding that night. He made some phone calls and, within a few hours, everyone invited had arrived and assembled in her room. The hospice director of spiritual care conducted the ceremony, and a special friend brought the necessary legal papers and prayed with the family. The long, white wedding gown hung on a hook on the outside of the closet door.

It was the most memorable wedding I have ever attended and the most beautiful! There were no flowers, no fancy wedding party, no church with a centre aisle. There was only a group of loving family members gathered around a lounge chair in a hospice bedroom and two people so devoted to each other they wanted to finish their life together on earth as a married couple.

When the nuptials were completed, we created a "Just Married" sign and placed it on the bedroom door. The new husband stayed with his bride while the rest of the family gathered in the fireside lounge and enjoyed each other's company. Lots of laughing and reminiscing could be heard. I found a cake in the refrigerator (probably the next day's dessert), and we cut it and served it as wedding cake. Lots of coffee, juice and chocolate chip cookies were consumed. Family members were as relaxed and as happy as the situation allowed.

Later, I sat with the new bride while her husband joined the rest of the family in the chapel for photographs. The family departed about 4 a.m. The new groom spent the rest of the night holding his wife's hand and comforting her. The young bride died at noon that day, only 9 1/2 hours after her wedding.

Throughout the wedding ceremony, I couldn't help but thank God for my wonderful, long marriage. Yet, the love this couple showed for each other was a shining example of what being and loving are all about. My prayer is that, some day, they will have all the time together that they deserve. R

Joan Cruickshank, a nurse and manager of hospice care at Rosedale Hospice, Calgary, is a member of Trinity Church in Calgary.

renewed and nurtured for ministry

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For information, contact Ministry & Church Vocations, The Presbyterian Church in Can
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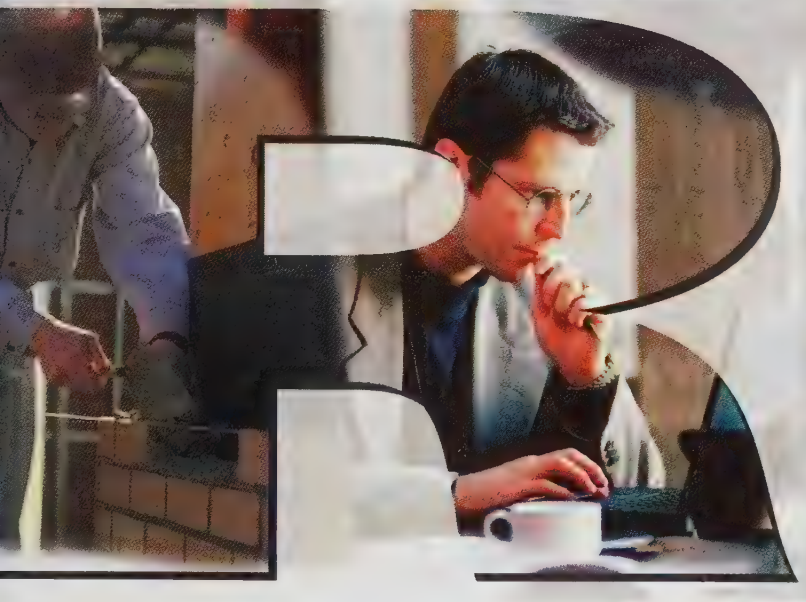
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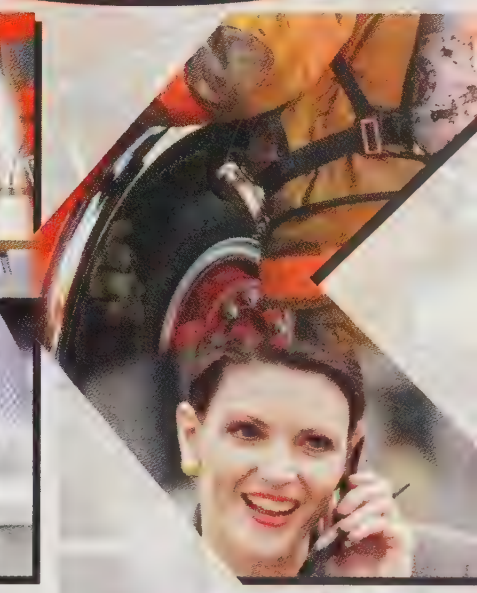
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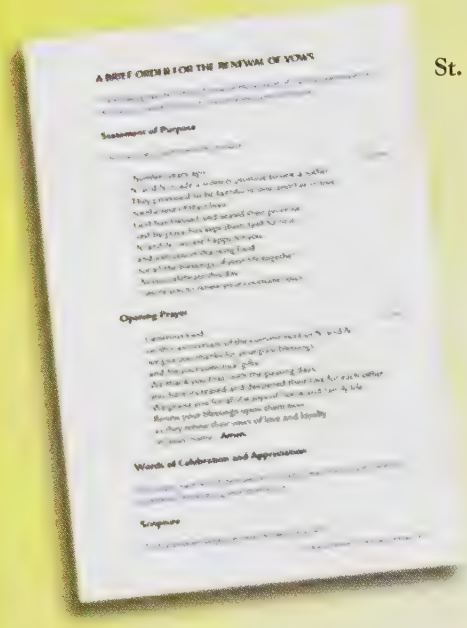
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John Congram



The summit in Waterloo

The Anglican-Lutheran Accord: something to celebrate or to question?

For some (I suspect fewer than most of us would like to admit), a significant ecclesiastical event occurred over the summer. On July 6, the Anglican Church of Canada's General Synod and the national convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada ratified the Waterloo Accord. As a result, the two denominations can now freely exchange clergy, transfer memberships and engage in co-operative projects together.

Both denominations invested tremendous effort and resources in this 18-year process. At the worship service marking the agreement, Anglican Archbishop Michael Peers wept and Lutheran Bishop Telmor Sartison said it was difficult not to cry. During my year as Moderator of our denomination, I sensed the degree of commitment and sacrifice each of these men brought to the process.

While Moderator, I urged Bishop Sartison to begin a similar dialogue with Presbyterians who, I assured him, already had much more in common with Lutherans than do Anglicans. That process has begun, with an initial meeting last December involving the Christian Reformed Church, the Evangelical Lutherans, the United Church and ourselves.

Of the three features in the Anglican-Lutheran agreement, two are already in place in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. We freely transfer and receive members from any Christian denomination. We engage in all kinds of ecumenical and co-operative projects. So did the Anglicans and Lutherans, even before this agreement. Only in the case of the free exchange of clergy do we come up a little short. This is not because we do not recognize the ministries of others as legitimate but because we believe anyone coming into the ministry of our church should have some familiarity with our theology, history and polity. It is normally not an onerous process.

While Presbyterians should rejoice and applaud this decision by our brothers and sisters in the Anglican and Lutheran churches, we should not be afraid to look at it with a critical eye. Will it result in strengthening and reinvigorating the mission and ministry of the whole church or will history record it was one more futile attempt of a dying institution to preserve itself? How significant is this decision to the under-50 crowd in the church and to outsiders? Among them, I imagine, it caused barely a ripple.

Most of these folk live in what some call the postmodern world. Their attitudes and values are totally different than those that have long held sway in most churches. That does not mean they are right and we are wrong or vice versa, only different. Distinctions important to us between denominations, between liberal and evangelical, between Roman Catholic and Protestant have long been inconsequential to them. They consider these old, irrelevant battles. Trying to define where they reside among these options is, to them, a waste of time. Someone who had been involved in the Anglican-Lutheran negotiations commented that 18 years was a relatively short time for the culmination of such a process. The postmodern person, already with little confidence in institutions, sees it as a long period of wasted effort.

For this person, the critical question is not are we right but are we good and can lives be changed through our efforts. If our lives do not exhibit a radical generosity, all talk will be a waste of time.

This does not devalue the importance of this agreement as a step toward greater unity in the Body of Christ, something all can celebrate. But it does alert us to the fact that, within the church, we work with a different agenda and different values from most of our peers. It calls us to be sensitive to what they are telling the church about priorities. These include taking a more open and dialogical view to life and to the world generally, viewing the church as more catalyst to mission than goal, thinking in more communal ways about both spirituality and the world, a world in which what we do is more important than what we say. Much in postmodernism we may choose to reject. But before we do that, we should examine our own values to see if they arise from the gospel or from our own culture.

The FLAMES initiative this year focuses on "Equipping the laity." This issue includes the first article, entitled "The myth of secular work," in our year-long series. The year will succeed if we are able to demonstrate that the church exists not for the benefit of its members but for the world. To that end, the church equips its members. With that emphasis, I believe, we will attract the attention of both those inside and those outside the church sometimes dubbed the postmodern generation.

John Congram

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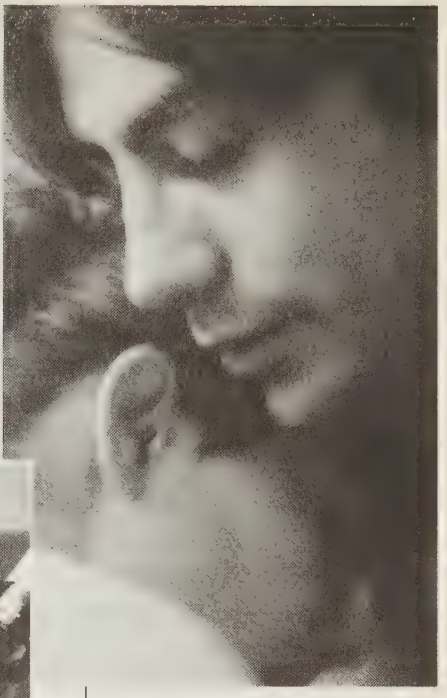
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Mental illness and the language of the church

We have all been guilty of making regrettable connections when using the language that surrounds mental illness. A tyrant dispenses evil and is described as a "madman." The office gets out of control due to incompetence and the scene is described as "crazy." The statements of a corrupt organization are declared "insane." Time and again, the language of mental illness becomes linked with things annoying, hurtful, evil, violent or frightening.

Connections like these may be casual at one level but they invite a descent into the language of blame. Such associations are bound to colour our responses to those who have some form of mental illness. Fortunately, the church of Jesus has different words and these can be used to develop life-enhancing links.

To settle for the language of the Word Alive column ("Among the tombs," June *Record*) is potentially dangerous. The subtitle, "psychiatric disorders & evil overcome," links terms in a way that can lead to misunderstandings. The article went on to join the psychiatric term "multiple personalities" with the religious term "a legion of demons."

Drawing connections in this way can tempt us back into the language of accusation. Too often, people who suffer from brain diseases and disorders are told they are demonic. This adds to their dismissal. Even people in ministry have been warned not to go near people who are mentally ill because they are evil.

The battle for identity is engaged. The June article suggested that the "name of the condition" may change over the years — "demonic" or "mad" — but the end result is the same. I disagree. The Bible is clear about the difference between illness and possession.

In this FLAMES year, the challenge is to equip laity. Our communities might blossom by grounding laypeople in brave Christian language that links us not only to dignified, blessed and suffering humanity but also announces to the world that God's presence has decorated with glory those who are profoundly ill.

Rodger Hunter,
Toronto

Shorter letters are more likely to be published and less likely to be edited

Sickness and evil

"Among the Tombs" by Ted Siverns says: "God is opposed to sickness; Jesus blamed the demonic powers for disease, sickness and death." Furthermore, "God frees us from and overcomes the power of evil."

Our church is changing, and many people are increasingly integrating the advances of knowledge into their beliefs. I strongly suspect most readers of the *Presbyterian Record* do not seriously believe that disease, sickness and death are attributable to demonic powers or evil of any other kind. It would be fitting to mention some modern-day miracles like penicillin, insulin, sulpha and quinine, psychotropic drugs and therapies.

Paul Marshall,
Barrie, Ont.

Presbyterian heroes

I am grateful to Virginia Bell, clerk of session at Briarwood Church, Beaconsfield, Quebec, for her inspiring article about Dr. Rea Brown (Lives Lived, June *Record*). As a McGill grad of a previous generation, I have admired Rea's outstanding athletic and professional career but was unaware of his Presbyterian roots. More people are drawn to Presbyterianism by example than by preaching, and Rea is an ideal role model.

In my younger days in Montreal, I was influenced by many dedicated Presbyterians. To mention a few: Rev. Ritchie Bell, whose cheery concern for others



The moment when lay reader Larry realizes that the Hebrew Scripture is actually in Hebrew!

made us feel better to be in his presence; Rev. Dr. Malcolm Campbell, minister of First Church, Montreal, for half a century, who always greeted his congregation with the happy salutation, "Glad to see you here in church this morning." He was also a leader in community affairs and was a longtime chair of the Montreal Protestant School Commission. My layperson hero was William Macklaier, a leading Montreal lawyer and lifelong supporter of Presbyterian endeavours.

Russ Merifield,
Toronto

Ready to laugh

Now that Peter Plymley II has demonstrated (June *Record*) his undoubted skill in ridiculing prayers, evangelical churches, revival crusades, soul-winning, the full gospel, the true and inerrant Word, "hymns and choruses awash in blood," "Amazing grace" and the arms of Jesus, maybe he can use his renowned epistolary ability to write something truly funny for a future edition of our esteemed denominational publication. A Calvinist ready to laugh,

Mariano Di Gangi
Ottawa

Commendation

The *Presbyterian Record* has been coming to my home as long as I can remember. This is my first letter to its editor and it is one of commendation for the high quality of the magazine.

In particular, thank you for the addition of the articles by Rev. Sheldon MacKenzie, a master story-teller and a stellar preacher. The articles have enriched the *Record* with their sincerity, humour, warmth and the love of God which radiates from them.

Jean Mackay Baudoux,
Kingston, Ont.

Kids of the Kingdom

Congratulations to Ken Stright ("Meeting the challenge," June *Record*) and his congregation in Pictou, Nova Scotia, for creating such a great program for the children.

Carol Hadland,
Prince Rupert, B.C.

Sharing

I am grateful for the willingness of synods to share resources! With the permission of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, Rev. Keith Boyer came to our congregation to lead a workshop entitled Feeding the Flock: Restaurants and Churches You'd Stand in Line For. The approach and the content of the workshop were wonderful and engaged our group immediately in the task at hand.

Thanks to the generosity of the synod and Keith Boyer's refreshing and pertinent approach to ministry in 2001, we have begun the process of enthusiastically renovating.

Shaun Seaman,
Kanata, Ont.

Are we homophobic?

Thanks for a truly excellent editorial (For the Record, June 2001). Please send me a copy of the 1994 report to General Assembly. I have also read Andrew Foster's article with the greatest interest and can only say, what a thoughtful group of people.

Dieter S. Leidel,
Barrie, Ont.

Having read John Congram's editorial and the accompanying article by Andrew Foster, I'm left with a taste of "Don't worry, we're just helping you get ready for something." I also get a sense of "We're going to right some wrongs." The feel of these two articles is somewhat more directive than the allusions of the text imply. There seems to be a more aggressive character couched in the soothing "Don't be afraid, we're not a bunch of radicals here" tone and reassurances.

I agree with sadness that Christians are not always up to par in the way we handle situations of this kind. One needs only to look at the way slaves, Jews, minorities and other ethnic groups were and are treated. Yet, the correction can also be wrong if we push the balance the other way in order to right some wrongs or to prevent such wrongs from being done. Is this what is happening here?

Michel Brazeau,
Sudbury, Ont.

It was refreshing to read Andrew Foster's discourse regarding sexual orientation in

How do you

fill out forms when you can't even read? How frustrating life must be for him, I think, as he plops the mass of paperwork down in front of me. He had turned 65 and wants me to help with the many application forms that must be completed to qualify for pension and affordable housing. But he's wary of forms and authority and, when I ask for his bank account information, he can barely contain his rage. But we continue the process and, eventually, his income and housing are in place.

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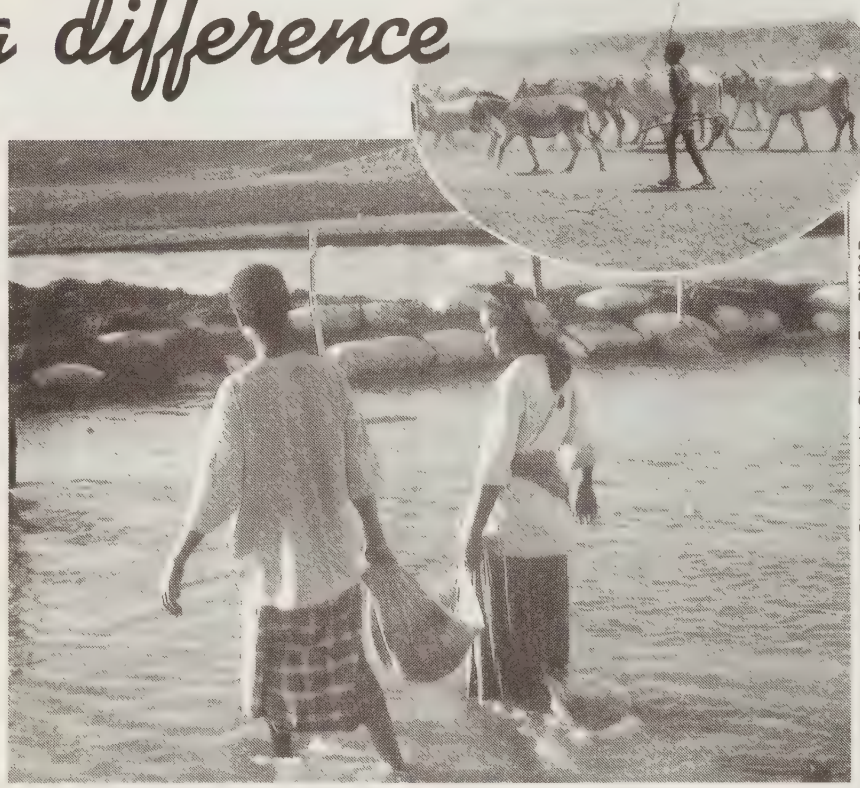
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the June *Record*. He was "bang on" with the analogy of his red sports car and his bald head. The former was *his choice*; the latter, genetic, *no choice*. I could go further and suggest the sexual orientation card is dealt at conception and played out, unchanged, over a lifetime.

Even intervention by the Holy Spirit, as professed by many fundamentalists, does not change a person's sexual orientation. The transformation may change outward personal conduct to a level of acceptance by the church; but, inwardly, the predisposition remains unchanged. A gay or lesbian remains just that.

Are there limitations in the appointed rolls of homosexuals in the church? Yes, but they should be the same as for the heterosexuals. Committed relationships of same-sex couples should be as acceptable as traditional marriages.

The refreshing part is that homosexuality can now be discussed openly in many religious circles. In some, the mention of the subject is met with rebuke, preventing discussion; thus, inadvertently, stunting personal spiritual growth. But for the most part, and with the blessing of Jesus, we should all be able to worship together, undivided, regardless of sexual orientation.

J. Gordon Neal,
Whitby, Ont

The Presbyterian Church is in decline and has been for several years. Shrinking enrolment can be traced, in part, to our failure to promote family values adequately inside and outside our faith communities. We are not providing a strong enough spiritual home for young people with children. And, judging from the direction the Special Committee re Sexual Orientation appears to be going (indeed, judging from its very existence), we will soon abandon traditional family values altogether to appease homosexuals and their insidious agenda.

Bob Cooper,
Fergus, Ont.

I must comment on your observation (For the *Record*, June 2001) that Jesus had nothing to say about homosexuality but a lot to say about other issues. The

reason Jesus ignored this topic was the simple fact it was not an issue in Israel any more than idolatry. Unlike the surrounding pagan nations, Israel was almost free of this sexual practice even as it was free of idol worship. Jesus did not break down open doors.

However, the few times Jesus is quoted as speaking against *porneia* (usually translated fornication), he also included in that word all kinds of sexual sins as defined by the Torah. That included homosexuality.

H. L. Wipprecht,
Cobalt, Ont.

Free trade

In his article "Free trade: for profit or for people?" (June *Record*), past Moderator Glen Davis opened a window on the workings of economic globalization in Mexico. He has contributed to a growing awareness of the consequences of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the possible consequences of the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

The Mexico scene has its parallel in other countries. Following the International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank intervention in the early 1980s, Somalia became dependent on imported grain, their livestock industry collapsed and the entire social fabric of the pastoral economy was undone. As a result of the IMF's "anti-inflation program" in Brazil, devaluation of the cruzeiro was imposed and inflation ran at over 20 per cent per month. A new layer of urban poverty sprang up with white-collar workers being evicted from their homes and even excluded from the slum areas. Most sectors of society, including the middle classes, were impoverished as a result of the IMF's "economic medicine." In Yugoslavia, an agreement with the IMF in 1990 resulted in 140 per cent inflation in 1991, 937 per cent in 1992 and 1,134 per cent in 1993.

The greater proportion of protestors at the Quebec Summit in April was not youngsters looking for fun or anarchists on a rampage but educated people with an awareness of what could happen on a wide scale. Where is the church at this critical time?

Lloyd R. Smith,
Ottawa

In recent decades, so-called "free trade" has become an unquestioned article of faith among the business and political élite of the industrial nations and the international bodies (like the World Trade Organization) they control. It has been sold to electorates largely on the basis of a simplistic notion that whatever is free must be good.

The past Moderator says international trade is here to stay. But it has been around for centuries and more. The call for "free trade" is not so much about maintaining or enhancing international trade as such, but about awarding to unelected bodies and corporations an unjustifiable and immoral freedom from democratic control. This is promoting a global social and economic order that has echoes of the feudal system in pre-medieval Europe. Rather than simply calling for modifying clauses in free trade agreements, perhaps the whole doctrine should be questioned.

Charles R. Neill,
Edmonton

briefly noted

Mission staff arrivals and departures
Arrivals: *Clara Henderson*, from Malawi, July 5; *Arlene Onuoha and family*, from Nigeria, July 19; *Heather Jones*, from Malawi, in August.
Departures: *Sylvie Babarik*, for Guatemala, late July; *Louise Gamble*, for Taiwan, August 14; *Marlene Peck*, for Malawi, August 17.

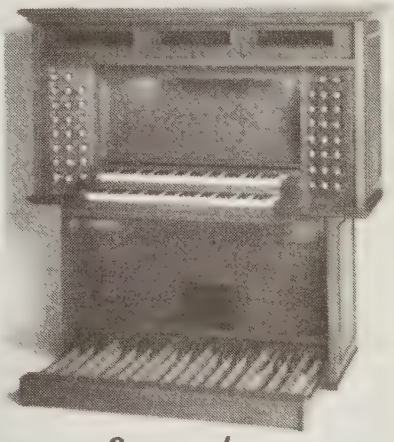
National staff arrivals and departures
Arrivals: *Mary Ingram*, as Youth in Mission co-ordinator, Sept. 3.
Departures: *Sarah Hoag*, FLAMES Mission Tours co-ordinator, duties fulfilled.

Church offices staff moves: *Judy Hass*, from clerk, Pension and Benefits, to administrative assistant, Pension and Benefits.

Deaths: *Malcolm (Mac) McLean*, June 17, former superintendent of missions (and possibly the only Presbyterian minister to be mentioned in a blues song — his son, Big Dave McLean, is a well-known blues performer); *James Martin*, principal and professor of New Testament, Vancouver School of Theology, 1972-1993, June 29.

Best Celtic band with a member who works at church offices: The Woolgatherers (answer: Heather Chappell).

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Joe Reed



Bringing our stories to the table

The God we serve will be listening, crying and laughing with our children and grandchildren

An ancient wooden table in the middle of a farm kitchen. Around it sat ministers of our church, several retired and several serving congregations. The topic: what will happen if and when The Presbyterian Church in Canada closes? Can we imagine God working in history without the church we love and to which we have given our lives?

To be sure, signs of hope abound. Faithfulness to what we have received. The presence of young people. I want to share the enthusiasm of the Young Adult Representatives to this year's General Assembly, the exciting mission involvements in Canada and abroad, the remarkable growth of Presbyterian World Service and Development, and the fact that the participation of women, once so controversial in our church, is now taken for granted …

But we are still an aging, largely white and Anglo-Saxon church preaching a gospel to an increasingly diverse polyglot and wonderfully multicoloured and multicultural Canada. Several presbyteries, some covering wide geographic areas of the country, struggle to keep going. We seek out signs of hope — and they are not hard to locate — but many ask the question about our survival. Have we, indeed, served a legitimate, even lofty purpose and has God decided to let the Presbyterian Church die?

My purpose here is not to be a harbinger of doom. It is, rather, to speak a word of consolation to those of us who minister in difficult circumstances, in areas where the church as we know it may not be flourishing.

God will work his purpose out in history and may decide to do with us whatever. The practical implications may scare us; for example, we must soon make decisions about things like the pension and medical plans.

I tremble as I write. Not because these thoughts are new. Most of us have tossed them around other battered kitchen tables. Surely we are learning humility. I pray we are also learning that God really is in control.

But this second conversation! Let me identify the woman with whom I spoke: Pauline Brown, now 50 years in India.

"For my people," she said, "the church really is The Presbyterian Church in Canada. We are their lifeline, the church that has consistently loved them, nurtured them, stood with them — the most marginalized and the most undervalued. When we did not have enough to eat during the Depression, my mother still set aside one chicken whose eggs were always sold for missions. To support our work. Even when we were hungry. The Bhil people know and remember that."

My own mission experience affirms that fact. Compared with India or Guyana or Nigeria, Central America is a recent initiative. And we did not go there to convert but, rather, to serve and to learn. No one knows, of course, how many of God's children live today because of Pauline's work. Or because of the work of Ken Kim in Guatemala, or Denise Van Wissen and David Villalonga in Nicaragua.

Who of the commissioners to this year's General Assembly can ever — ever — forget Jack MacIntosh's plea for faithfulness or the tearful appreciation of his and Beth's ministry of almost half a century? Who will ever forget the defiant call of the president of the Korean Christian Church in Japan's women, who took strength from the presence of women at our General Assembly, announcing that Korean women in Japan are now also voting members of their courts?

A kitchen table. Battered by years of use — of families, of arguments and fist-pounding, and of laughs and celebrations. We cannot know whether The Presbyterian Church in Canada will always sit at the table. But we know the God we serve will always be listening, crying and laughing with our children and our grandchildren. And at that table will be the most unlikely people: the Bhils, the transients from Toronto rooming houses, the women of Armagh, the children of the dumps of Nicaragua and Guatemala, the mothers of Sharpsville — and, yes, the Scots and the Irish and the Koreans whose faces are familiar to many of us and whose daughters and sons many of us are.

What a privilege, what a joy to sit at that table. What a privilege to bring our own story.



Moderator's itinerary

September
India and Kenya

R. Sheldon MacKenzie



Contact lenses

Like chickens, we sometimes pick and scratch at one another to relieve our frustrations and disappointments

Before he retired, Allan Schreiner of Santa Rosa, California, had an enormous poultry farm. He raised some chickens for their eggs and others for the meat market.

Schreiner had thousands of chickens on his factory farm. At such a farm, the chickens are in cages where they are in constant contact with one another. "Modern methods of raising chickens," wrote Schreiner, "cause severe social problems among them, not unlike the problems experienced by humans in crowded areas of big cities. Chickens on these large factory farms no longer run in the fields where they have to scratch and pick for a living. They are confined to cages or crowded areas where food and water are provided."

This means the chickens have more time to pick and scratch at one another. In fact, they take out their social frustrations on other chickens. In their confined quarters, according to Schreiner, the birds are victims of what in human nature we might call excessive stress, tension or burnout. In the case of the poultry, weak birds are sometimes destroyed by more aggressive ones.

In response to this problem, Schreiner developed contact lenses for chickens! At peak production, his firm produced 150,000 pairs of lenses per day. The lenses were made of moulded plastic and fit comfortably over the eyeball of the fowl.

Now, unlike human contact lenses that help people to see better, lenses for chickens have a built-in distortion. This prevents the birds from seeing the situation as it really is. The reason for the lenses is simply a matter of economics. Chickens see well enough with the lenses only to eat and drink, but not well enough to fight with their neighbours. The birds become more tranquil and less excitable. Their distorted vision makes them complacent and indifferent to their surroundings.

It is precisely because humans cannot remain indifferent to their surroundings or complacent about them that they suffer stress and destructive tension. Like the chickens, they "pick and scratch" at one another as a way of relieving their frustrations and disappointments. Sometimes, as we know, these tensions erupt into violence of various kinds.

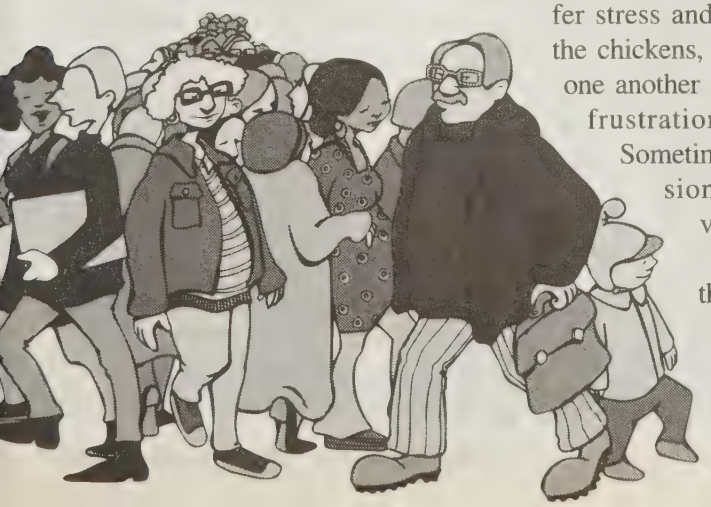
Albert Schweitzer wrote that the reason many people are unable to shake off their stresses, excessive worry and real or imagined tension is our intoxication with activity. He illustrated this by referring to social and working situations in which religious people react to tensions, pressures, upsets and frustrations without hesitating either to think or to pray. And just as many people, maybe more, are damaged by these "religious" people as they are by any decent pagan in society.

Of all people in society, Christians ought to be the ones most characterized by a creative response to problems — something that is difficult to achieve. (Religious people are as bedevilled by stresses and tensions as those with no faith at all.) Christians are, after all, those with the spiritual resources to find solutions and they have an appreciation for the healing power of God in human life.

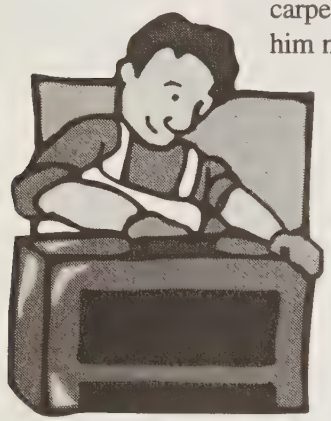
The reason many people are unable to shake off their stresses, excessive worry and real or imagined tension is our intoxication with activity

In a letter on this topic to a group of early Christians, the Apostle Paul wrote (II Corinthians 4:8-9): "We are hard-pressed on every side, but we are never hemmed in; we are bewildered, but we are never at our wit's end; we are hunted, but we are never abandoned to our fate; we are struck down, but we are not left to die."

Sometimes, it is terribly difficult to believe that. R



R. Sheldon MacKenzie, who lives in New Glasgow, N.S., is a retired professor from Memorial University in St. John's, Nfld., and a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.



The church's approach to any intelligent carpenter is usually confined to exhorting him not to be drunk and disorderly in his leisure hours, and to come to church on Sundays. What the church should be telling him is this: that the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables.

— Dorothy L. Sayers

If the average church should suddenly take seriously the notion that every laymember — man or woman — is really a minister of Christ, we could have something like a revolution in a very short time.

— Elton Trueblood

When we see laws being enacted that fly in the face of the Kingdom, we are called to object. The church has everything to do with politics. We are called to stand up for justice, to be the conscience of the state, to hold the government's feet to the fire.

— Glen Davis at the 127th General Assembly

The kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work (a) that you need most to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done. If you really get a kick out of your work, you have presumably met requirement (a), but if your work is writing TV deodorant commercials, the chances are you've missed requirement (b). On the other hand, if your work is being a doctor in a leper colony, you have probably met requirement (b), but if most of the time you're bored and depressed by it, the chances are you have not only bypassed (a) but probably aren't helping your patients much either.

— Frederick Buechner in *Wishful Thinking*

The mission field

The mission field for the disciples began on the mountain where Jesus appeared to them. The mission field for you and me is no longer China, East Africa, Belarus or Fort Smith. It's outside the doors of this beautiful church. Indeed, I'm told that in one church in Orlando, Florida, there is a banner over the parking lot that reads, "You are now entering the mission field." It's the person beside you on a flight somewhere, or with difficulty in the subway, or over a back fence, or on an Internet chatline.

— David Kilgour, speaking at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, Toronto

God and prayer

Why is it, when we talk to God, we call it prayer; but, when God talks to us, we call it schizophrenia?

— Lily Tomlin

The world of children

There are approximately 50 million uprooted people around the world — refugees who have sought safety in another country, and people displaced within their own country. About half of the displaced population are children.

— from *Refugees* magazine

This is not an announcement that will determine the Kingdom of God, but the clerks have asked me to slip it in. When you write out your amendments on the forms provided, please do not tear them out of your book of reports. The clerks find the holes helpful for filing.

— Joe Reed at the 127th General Assembly

Diana religion

In 1997, we had a remarkable encounter with this old Ephesian stuff. For weeks, the attention of the world was captured by the death of [Diana, Princess of Wales]. I knew next to nothing about Diana at the time. But, in three weeks, I got a crash course in Diana religion — for this was a religious event. Diana was treated with the veneration and adoration of a goddess. At her death, the world fell down and worshipped.



Diana was the perfect goddess for a religion that didn't want anything to do with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but was desperate to worship someone or something that would provide a sense of beauty and transcendence.

— Eugene Peterson

pastoral epistles from peter plymley II

My dear editor:

September — and each church awaits the gradual return of the scattered and sun-drenched flock. New campaigns are plotted, gaps in the ranks of Sunday school teachers filled, Anniversary Sunday guest preachers booked, Thanksgiving and Advent themes dusted off, sessions and committees pushed and pulled into gear, choirs reassembled, plans laid to refill the coffers depleted by the summer hiatus, synods awaited with an expectant or somnolent hush … It can make a body tired thinking about the effort needed to put the "organized" into "organized religion."

I am not as old as T. S. Eliot's creation J. Alfred Prufrock but I understand his sad reflection: "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons." Except, in my case, I would substitute meetings for coffee spoons. At every level of church government and organization (it always seems there are more than four — they subdivide when you're not looking), I have attended organizational — or that was their intent — meetings. More each year (or so it feels) than newly neutered hymns in the *Book of Praise*.

I have served under conveners, lay and clerical, who relish the business model and revel in flow-charts, task forces with ever-expanding and transmuting tasks, evolving mission statements — everything but "Hi! My name is … "



adhesive name tags. This style only works in larger congregations or committees and, even there, people get a bit discouraged when the flow-charts grow longer than the lists of "begats" in I Chronicles.

At the other end of the organizational spectrum, I have served in small congregations where the flow-chart, if one were drawn up, would consist of one box. The wise minister or convener in these places knows that, before a project is launched, first right of refusal belongs to one of the half-dozen or so people who see that anything gets done. A lot of managing in these instances must be done by instinct, or by a kind of radar that detects the unmarked territorial boundaries. It's an arcane skill, a little like phrenology.

> *It can make a body tired thinking about the effort needed to put the "organized" into "organized religion"*

Have you ever run across the "non-directional" style of managing? It's nice work if you can get it. The team leader (or "enabler") waits for ideas to bubble up from below, or seep up, as the case may be, and then "facilitates the process" by telling others where they can get the information and/or help for whatever they have in mind. Sometimes, the rise in the water-table of inspiration is less than geyser-like; but, that's all right, the enabler can bide his or her time happily, gathering rosebuds of information that might eventually flower if someone can find a vase.

Then there is the cheerleader or social-director-on-a-cruise-ship approach that takes its cue from the question "Is EVERYBODY happy?" And if you serve under one such, you'd better be. Positive thinking knows no overkill. You can be creatively jollied along past the point of exhaustion. "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart" is not, for such leaders, only a children's chorus; it is an order. Never do the words "I've got a fun idea" chill the heart as they do when uttered through a smile welded in place.

I wonder, under what organizational system did the Apostles operate? Peter, James and John certainly stand out as a *de facto* executive committee. Though Judas's character got worse in hindsight ("What did Jesus ever see in him?"), his stint as treasurer had Presbyterian overtones, if only in Matthew's version (26:6-13) of an incident told with variations elsewhere. But how did they manage day-to-day?

"Let's see, casting out demons at noon; then, another set-to with the Pharisees at mid-afternoon; lepers after supper.

"Has a lunch committee been formed for tomorrow? The advance notices indicate a good crowd. We can't count on loaves and fishes every time. No? Then better have a boat ready for a getaway.

"Try and keep him from going off to pray without telling us first. And, for heaven's sake, get him to write it down. It's bound to get mixed up if he doesn't."

Doesn't seem likely, does it.

We need the people who keep the nuts and bolts together, oil the machinery, change the filters. Christian dedication, even a kind of weary heroism, can be manifest in yet another evening spent at yet another meeting. But, I sometimes wonder, when he said "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name … " was he, maybe, suggesting an optimum number?

Your organization man,

Peter Plymley II

Over the centuries, millions of Christians have believed a crippling myth: ministry is only for "ministers." God's call only to receive ministry and to support the ministries of others. However, the Bible renounces this myth with an

The myth of secular



by Eddy Hall and Gary Morsch

God does not divide life into religious and non-religious. God calls us to live so that our entire lives are sacred

Jan Lundy runs a ministry organization, but you won't find it listed in the *Yellow Pages* under that heading. You'll have to look under "Laboratories." Her business is a medical laboratory in Oklahoma City that prepares microscope slides of tissues from which doctors diagnose patients' illnesses.

Precision Histology has been going for 10 years and, as the world measures success, it has not made much of a splash. For the first few years, Jan had to reinvest all her earnings into the company to buy equipment and, today, she earns only a modest wage. But that's OK

ministry, so the myth goes, comes only to the elect few. The rest of us are laypeople by default, called mpowering truth: if I am a Christian, I am called to minister.

— from The Lay Ministry Revolution

with Jan because her company is succeeding at what it was created to do.

"From the beginning, our main purpose has been to help people," Jan explains. This happens in various ways. Jan hired lab technicians with little or no technical skill and gave them on-the-job training. These were often mothers from low-income families who lacked the resources to pay for formal training. One technician she hired was already trained but recovering from drug addiction and not physically able to go back to work in the hospital. Jan also made it possible for employees to keep their children with them at work by providing a play area at the lab and, when necessary, hiring a child-care worker at no cost to the mothers.

Karen, one of Jan's first trainees, has recently returned to work for Jan full-time after gaining hospital experience. "Jan gave me a job when I had no job and no training to get a job," she says. "Christy was six weeks old then and, because Jan made it possible for me to keep Christy with me at work, I was able to nurse her."

Jan relates to her employees not only as individuals but also as families, including spouses and children at company social events. And, of course, in all these relationships, she tries to show God's love and to share her faith in appropriate ways.

As part of its ministry, the lab prepares slides at no charge for three local non-profit clinics serving low-income patients. But, at its most basic, the lab ministers through the services it is paid to provide. As the name she chose for her company implies, Jan insists upon work of the highest quality, from herself and from her employees. "I treat each slide as though it were for a member of my own family," Jan says. "After all, each one is for someone's mother, brother or sister."

Once, when a lab employee delivered slides to a client, the doctor noticed a problem with one slide. He told the employee, "I know Jan will take care of this because she's very religious." The doctor recognized that the conscientiousness he had come to expect from Jan's company was a direct expression of her faith.

"Caring whether people have a good diagnosis is important to me," says Jan. "Doctors need to be able to interpret slides easily and accurately. If my slides enable them to do that, I am ministering to the patients whether they know it or not." Most of the people to whom Jan and her co-workers minister are people they never meet, but that doesn't make their ministry any less real or less important.

Secular or sacred?

God doesn't view work the way our culture does. Our culture identifies a few vocations — those involving professional ministry — as sacred. Other vocations — such as accountant, sanitation worker, homemaker and mechanic — are labelled secular. These jobs, according to the conventional wisdom, are not concerned with religion.

But God does not want us to divide life into the religious and non-religious, the secular and the holy. God calls us to live so that our entire lives are sacred. Paul writes, "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31). God calls us to do everything — from eating breakfast in the morning to working during the day, to playing with our kids in the evening — with the purpose of bringing glory to God, causing others to think more highly of God. For the Christian, every aspect of life and every moment of every day are to be holy.

Ministering through our work means more than simply ministering while at work. Looking for appropriate opportunities to talk about faith with co-workers, clients or customers is important, but ministering through our work goes beyond this. Modelling such Christian virtues as honesty, respect and diligence in workplaces where lying, put-downs and loafing are the norm can be a powerful witness. But ministering through our work goes still further.

Ministering through our work means ministering to people's needs by the very work we do. Is this possible? Is it possible to minister by baking bread? By typing a letter? By changing a diaper? By washing dishes? Is it possible to minister by driving a truck or by building a house?

Many laypeople think that because of their work they have fewer opportunities to minister than do ministry professionals. In fact, most laypeople have an access to people outside the church that most ministry professionals will never have. Being a layperson, far from limiting your opportunities for ministry, actually puts you on the front lines.

— from The Lay Ministry Revolution

If we understand that ministry isn't restricted to meeting spiritual needs but includes responding in Christian love to any kind of need, the answer is yes. You may have been ministering through your work for many years, even if you haven't called it ministry.

Does this mean all workers minister through their work? No, it doesn't. Whether your work is also ministry depends on the kind of work you do and the spirit in which you do it.

Assessing your job as ministry

Test #1: Does your work meet needs?

In the New Testament, the primary word for ministry is *diakonia*, meaning "service." Different versions of the New Testament translate diakonia "service" and "serve," or "ministry" and "minister," or even both ways within the same version. To minister, then, is to serve. It is to meet another's need.

When Jan Lundy and her employees prepare slides, they are meeting needs. They are helping to diagnose patients' illnesses so doctors can prescribe appropriate treatment.

The cashier at your grocery store is helping to provide your family with food — an important need. The auto mechanic who repairs your car meets a need. Because the people doing these jobs meet people's needs, their jobs can be ministries.

Some jobs, though, do not meet people's needs. Manufacturing cigarettes, for example, meets no legitimate need and the product causes widespread suffering and death. No matter how socially respectable a job may be, if it doesn't help to provide a service or product that meets people's needs, it is not ministry.

Test #2: Do you have a servant spirit?

For a job to be Christian ministry, it is not enough that it meets a need. It must also be motivated by servanthood.

When Melody (Eddy's wife) was in the hospital for the birth of their fourth child, she felt surrounded by God's care. This was due in no small part to the ministry of compassionate Christian nurses. One nurse, however, did not want to be there. She came into the room complaining that she had been called in. She complained about the floor to which she had been assigned. She performed her duties, but never had a pleasant word for the patient. Taking care of Melody was not an opportunity to serve; it was only a job. Melody did not feel ministered to by that nurse.

A servant spirit can transform any useful job into a ministry. If a bank's computer programmer approaches his work not merely as a way to earn a paycheque or to increase the bank's profits, but as a way to serve the bank's customers with fast, accurate, dependable service — something we all need — the job can become a ministry, even if he never meets the customers. Being motivated by God's love for others is what makes the difference.

Whenever a Christian works with a caring commitment to serve those to whom he or she is providing needed goods or services, the work itself becomes more than a job; it is transformed into ministry.

The people you serve

When you work — whether at home, in an office, or in the cab of an 18-wheeler — whom are you serving? Whose needs are you meeting by the product or service you help to provide? If you can answer that question, you are half-way toward having a ministry job rather than a secular job.

To go the other half of the way, you simply do your work for those people. Your goal, as you work, is to serve people and to meet their needs.

A Christian builder prays for the family that will live in the home he is building. A quilter prays for the family spending cold nights snuggled under her quilt. These workers have found a way to remind themselves whom they are serving. They are inspired by the fact that their work will minister to specific people though they have not yet met. Not only are they lovingly preparing a house and a quilt for their future owners but, by their prayers, they are also releasing God's blessing into the lives of those they serve.

Remembering whom you are serving can turn ordinary tasks into ministry. One mother we know confesses that, when her baby demanded to be held, she was tempted to feel she was wasting time. As she rocked her baby, she wasn't preparing lunch. She wasn't doing the laundry.

But, one day, as she impatiently rocked her baby, she remembered the last sentence of a magazine article she had read: "A baby needs to be held when a baby needs to be held." That line reminded her she was engaged in one of the most important ministries in the world — showing love to her child. She was then able to relax and concentrate on "doing love," confident there was no better way to invest her time.

How can you remind yourself whom you are serving with your work? By putting a picture of a representative customer on the wall above your desk. By praying for the person who will receive each package you ship out of the shipping room. By offering a warm smile and a kind word to each customer you wait on. Whatever your reminder is, allow a vision of the people you serve through your work to inspire you to add the secret ingredient of love to every task. When love for those you serve inspires your daily work, your work becomes ministry.

No Christian should do "secular" work — work that is not sacred. Whether paid or unpaid, performed at home or at the office or in the factory, any legitimate work can glorify God and serve other people. Every Christian's work can be holy. R

For further reflection and discussion

- What do you consider a key to understanding how everyday work can also be ministry. (See Matthew 20:26, 28; Acts 13:5; I Peter 4:10; Ephesians 4:12.)
- What needs do you meet through your work?
- What helps, or could help, to remind you daily of whom you are serving?
- What opportunities does your work give you to respond to needs (that is, minister) beyond what your job requires of you?

Resources

The Lay Ministry Revolution by Eddy Hall and Gary Morsch is available through the Living Stones Web site at www.living-stones.com.

Gary Morsch, MD, a physician in Olathe, Kansas, is founder and director of Heart to Heart International. Eddy Hall of Goessel, Kansas, is a senior consultant with Living Stones Associates, a church consulting team that works with churches to enhance ministry effectiveness through equipping leaders and through integrated planning of ministries, staffing, facilities and finances. This article is adapted from *The Lay Ministry Revolution* by Eddy Hall and Gary Morsch.

National Defence / Défense nationale



Opportunities for Training and Ministry in the Chaplain Branch of the Canadian Forces

- ☑ Clergy or mandated Roman Catholic laity for full-time ministry in the Regular Force
- ☑ Clergy or mandated Roman Catholic laity for part-time ministry in the Reserve Force
- ☑ Clergy, seminarians, qualified laity for summer ministry in Cadet Camps
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Prerequisites:

- meet the Canadian Forces medical and physical fitness standards
- be a team player in an ecumenical environment
- obtain the permission of your ecclesiastical or religious superiors

For summer 2002 enrolment in the Regular Force, you must contact us before October 15, 2001.

For more information, call us toll free at our Recruiting Line (1 866 502-2203) or collect at the Office of the Chaplain General (1 613 995-8711).

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- ☑ Clergé ou laïcs catholiques mandatés pour un ministère à temps plein dans la Force régulière
- ☑ Clergé ou laïcs catholiques mandatés pour un ministère à temps partiel dans la Réserve
- ☑ Clergé, séminaristes, laïcs qualifiés pour un ministère dans les camps d'été des Cadets
- ☑ Séminaristes, ou étudiants à temps plein en théologie qui s'orientent vers le ministère, pour le programme d'été de formation d'aumônier de la Réserve

Qualifications préalables :

- répondre aux normes médicales et de condition physique des Forces canadiennes;
- être membre d'une équipe œcuménique;
- obtenir la permission de son supérieur ecclésiastique ou religieux.

Pour s'enrôler dans la Force régulière durant l'été 2002, il faut prendre contact avec nous avant le 15 octobre 2001.

Pour de plus amples renseignements, téléphonez sans frais à notre Ligne de recrutement (1 866 502-2203) ou au bureau de l'Aumônier général à frais virés (1 613 995-8711).

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The last laugh

by Chris Vais

When we grasp our true size in the grand scheme of things, we may laugh or we may cry. Both are appropriate responses, but those who choose laughter may turn out to be the hardier breed

— Barbara Brown Taylor

There's no mistaking my laugh these days. When something strikes me as being funny, you can hear me in the next room. When I'm really worked up, you can hear me two rooms away. Because my breathing is weak, and my neck and facial muscles have atrophied, I gasp when I laugh. I shake and drool, sucking in oxygen like a drowning man dragged out of the lake and safe on the shore. It begins in a low moan and, then, picks up in volume and intensity, slicing the air like a siren as if I'm warning the village about a coming attack.

I laugh a lot. That may sound strange given the disease I have. ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) is progressive and fatal. It attacks the motor neurons in the brain and the spinal cord. When these nerve cells die, they can no longer send impulses to the brain, so the ability to initiate and control muscle movement is lost. This leads to weakness in the arms and legs, in speech, swallowing and breathing as muscles begin to waste away. Yet, through it all, the mind remains unaffected. On the surface, it's no

laughing matter. But, as with everything (and I mean *everything*), there's always a way to laugh about it.

I contemplated calling this "The lighter side of ALS," but that's a boring title. Next, I thought of "Fun 'n games with a terminal neuromuscular illness," but that's too long and, maybe, a bit bracing at first glance. Then I considered, with a tip of my hat to the Irish novelist Roddy Doyle, "Lou Gehrig ha ha ha." But that's probably too obscure. Instead, for reasons that will become clear, I settled on "The last laugh."

Several decades ago, Dr. Norman Cousins chronicled his experiences of sickness and disease along with his awareness of healing in a book called *Anatomy of an Illness*. He worked closely with his physician on a course for recovery that was considered unorthodox by many in the medical profession. He remembered reading a book as a student called *The Stress of Life* by Hans Selye. In that book, the author detailed the negative effects on the body of emotions such as frustration, fear and suppressed anger. This led Cousins to ask, if negative emotions produce negative chemical changes in the body, wouldn't positive emotions produce positive chemical changes? He began to explore the therapeutic value of love, faith, hope, laughter, confidence and the will to live. "Nothing is less funny," he said, "than being flat on your back with all the bones in your spine and joints hurting." With a healthy measure of hope and faith in his heart, he set about to work on laughter.

His systematic program included watching old Marx Brothers films and *Candid Camera* classics. It worked. "I made the joyous discovery," he said, "that 10 minutes of genuine belly laughter had an anaesthetic effect and would give me at least two hours of pain-free sleep. When the pain-killing effect of the laughter wore off, we would switch on the motion-picture projector again and, not infrequently, it would lead to another pain-free sleep interval. Sometimes, the nurse read to me out of a trove of humour books."

Norman Cousins and his physician took sedimentation rate readings before and after each fit of laughter. There was a drop of at least five points each time. This was cumulative over time, indicating that humour enhanced the body's ability to fight inflammation. "I was greatly elated," said Cousins, "by the discovery that there is a physiologic basis for the ancient theory that laughter is good medicine."

I have ALS and I laugh often. Of course, I also cry often. I've learned there's not much difference between the two. As Frederick Buechner says, "No matter what the immediate occasion is of either your laughter or your tears, the object of both ends up being yourself and your own life." I've learned the best humour has deep, deep roots. It grows out of dark, loamy soil. I've also learned that laughter leads to healing.

Imagination was given to man to compensate him for what he is not. A sense of humour was provided to console him for what he is.

— Horace Walpole

I want to share with you some of the more comedic moments of my life over the past few years since my diagnosis.

Some of the laughs have occurred around the toilet. Once, in a public washroom, a friend got me up and, then, left me alone in the stall to do my business. On this occasion, I had to go *really badly*. My fingers fumbled feebly with the fly of my pants but, in their weakness (and in my panic), they failed to move swiftly enough and I soon felt the tepid rush of urine down the front of my thighs. I nearly cried out of frustration and embarrassment. That wasn't the funny part. The funny part came when, in a moment of pure grace, my friend, having discovered what happened, sat me back down in my chair, wheeled me out of the stall and lined me up against the wall beneath the electric hand dryer. He punched the button and swivelled the spout, waving warm air over my lap like a magic wand. That's when we started to laugh. It got funnier when people walked in and beheld this strange sight. They looked away quickly, as if they'd stumbled upon some weird, forbidden bathroom ritual. We couldn't get my pants completely dry, so my friend graciously offered his sweater to cover up the remaining stain as we ventured forth into the night.

Sometimes, laughter occurs when I'm getting dressed. When someone offers to help put my coat on, for instance, he needs to push me forward in order to get the material far enough down my back. As my weight shifts, my chair teeters to the fore until the small anti-tipper wheels stop me from going too far. To those who are unaccustomed to the mechanics of my chair, it appears as though I may spill out and land face first on the floor. When someone is helping me for the first time, as my chair lurches ahead, it's fun (for me, at least) to shout "Whoa!" as if I'm going to fall out.

That's cruel, you say. Maybe. But when you have ALS, you need to make fun in any way you can. It's even better when the target is a strong, unsuspecting, able-bodied person.

Similarly, there's fun to be had with a feeding tube. Shortly after mine was put in, some friends were over and we were sitting around the kitchen table. Susan was about to give me a flush, which involves swilling water through the tube using a 60-millilitre syringe. The tube goes in my side, through the lining of my stomach and into my bowel. One of my friends is particularly queasy about such things. You will never catch him watching open-heart surgery on The Learning Channel. When his wife watches *ER* in bed, he pulls the covers up over his head. I could tell he was uncomfortable with the procedure as he turned away and, then, peered back through squinted eyes. As Susan screwed the syringe onto the end of the tube and started to push the water through, he asked, "Do you *feel* anything when this happens?"

Instead of answering honestly, "No, I don't feel a thing," I screamed "AAAHHH!" My friend jumped and let out a desperate yelp. Again, you may say

that's cruel. And I say, making someone jump and shout is one of the perks of the disease.

We've also had some humorous moments because of my inability to speak clearly. Although it's immensely frustrating, we are able to laugh at times. Like when I was visiting with a friend in our home. It was the first of the month, and I noticed the calendar on the wall needed to have a page turned. I said, "Can you change the calendar?"

The ghastly expression on his face told me he had misunderstood. His voice trembled as he asked, "Y-y-you want me to change your catheter?"

I'm grateful my friends feel comfortable enough to laugh with me at the circumstances surrounding this disease. They refuse to tiptoe around my illness. They aren't afraid to poke fun; often, it's a darkly shadowed hilarity. I'm thankful for that, even when the joke is on me.

I was telling a couple of friends that I would be receiving an honorary doctorate from Knox College, Toronto. One of them remarked, "At 38, you're probably the youngest person ever to be given a Doctor of Divinity degree."

The other chimed in, "Yeah, but we need to count that in ALS years." That sounds something like doggie years, doesn't it? These are among the same friends who, when they want to secure a seat closer to the stage at a concert or a better parking space or any kind of preferential treatment, urge me to "Play the ALS card."

My favourite joke came shortly after I was told I had ALS. I was talking with my friend Peter. We have another good friend, Jeff Chalmers (known affectionately as Chalms), who bears the brunt of a lot of jokes among our friends. I was telling Peter about what my brother Tom said when I first saw him following my diagnosis. Tom said, "I wish it could be *me* instead of *you*. I wish it could be *me*."

Peter said, "What a beautiful thing to say." Then, he paused for a few seconds and said, "*I* wish it could be *Chalms*!"

Dark times require dark humour. David Roche knows this. He was born with a severe facial disfigurement — an extensive and benign tumour on the left side of his face. As an infant and child, he underwent many painful surgeries and heavy radiation therapy. This left plum-coloured burns on his temple, cheek and eyelid. The lower part of his face stopped growing. He even lost his lower lip.

Pleasure is very seldom found where it is sought; our brightest blazes of gladness are commonly kindled by unexpected sparks.

— Samuel Johnson

"We with facial deformities are children of the dark," he says. "Our shadow is on the *outside*. And we can see in the dark. We can see you, we see you turn away but, one day, we finally understand that you turn away not from *our* faces but from your own fears. From those things inside you that you think mark you as someone unlovable to your family, to society and even to God. All those years, I kept my bad stories in the dark, but not anymore. Now I am stepping out into the light. And this face has turned out to be an elaborately disguised gift from God."

Of late, David Roche keeps busy fulfilling numerous public speaking engagements and leading workshops on story-telling. He has also written and performed a hilarious, award-winning, one-man show called *The Church of 80% Sincerity*. Humour is "the most subversive of the arts," says Roche. "It's my primary tool. Disability culture has always nurtured a dark-streaked humour. It is a shamanic tool that can dissolve fears and open windows to the unconscious, reframing disfigurement and disability and paving the way for a less fearful, healthier world-view."

That's what humour does. It stamps out ignorance and prejudice and fear. Frederick Buechner says: "Laughter comes from as deep a place as tears come from and, in a way, it comes from the same place. As much as tears do, it comes out of the darkness of the world where God is of all missing persons the most missed, except that it comes not as an ally of darkness but as its adversary, not as a symptom of darkness but as its antidote." Laughter, to paraphrase Bruce Cockburn, "kicks at the darkness till it bleeds daylight."

And so we laugh. We laugh because laughing is better than crying and, maybe, not even all that different. We laugh at ourselves because laughter has that in common with weeping. We laugh because, having used up all our tears, we have nothing but laughter left. Because, however dark and painful this moment is, we know it will pass. We know death is not the final word. Neither is disease, loneliness, sorrow or pain. In the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God speaks the final word, and it is love. We laugh because we place our trust in the One who has the last laugh. And this gives us life. R

To laugh often and much; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Chris Vais is a Presbyterian minister who lives in Guelph. He produces a newsletter called *For Words*. You may contact him at Box 31013 Guelph, Ont. N1H 8K1 or e-mail 2deep4words @home.com. This article was first presented to the Knox College Alumnae Association in June 2001.

Tips for helping infertile couples



by Marlo M. Schalesky

Infertile couples are everywhere — in our churches, small groups, families and neighbourhoods. In fact, one out of every six couples experiences infertility. And, despite their polite smiles, these couples are often hurting — filled with longing, pain and questions that have no easy answers. They may even be in the midst of a spiritual crisis that is shaking the foundations of their faith. And, yet, when they most need the church, too often they find other Christians to be a source of added stress rather than much needed support. So how can we minister to infertile couples in a way that helps and doesn't hurt them? Here are some suggestions:

- **Don't** try to make the infertile couple feel better by complaining about your own children or by telling them they are "lucky" not to have to deal with the stresses of having children.
- Don't offer unsolicited advice on how to get pregnant. Suggestions such as "just relax" or "if you adopt" are not helpful.
- Don't assure the person "God will give you a child." There are no guarantees every couple will be able to have children.
- Don't ask a childless couple, "So when are you going to start a family?" The two of them are already a family. Children expand a family; they don't make one.
- Don't avoid any mention of children or pregnancy. Your awkwardness will only make the couple feel awkward in return.
- Don't offer reasons or excuses for God. Telling a couple why God may not want them to have children is not only painful, it's presumptuous.
- **Do** let the couple know you are continuing to pray for them.
- Do remember them on special days, such as Mother's Day. A simple note saying "I know this is a hard day for you. Just wanted to let you know you are in my thoughts and prayers" can mean much.
- Do be sensitive about asking the couple to be involved in children's ministries. Some infertile couples find joy in min-

istering to the children, while others find it difficult. The choice must be left to them, without any pressure or incrimination if they should choose not to be involved. The same applies to attending events such as baby showers.

- Do feel free to ask questions. If the couple is seeking treatment, enquire as to how they are managing. Infertility treatments can be emotionally, physically and financially stressful. Couples will feel cared for when you ask about how *they* are doing rather than if the treatments are "working."
- Do realize infertility is often a long and painful journey. It is not something that goes away in a few months or that the couple will soon "get over."
- Do provide the couple with a safe place for venting their spiritual questions and doubts. It is not unusual for infertile couples to question God's love or fairness. A listening ear is more helpful than pat answers. R

Marlo Schalesky is a free-lance writer living in Gilroy, California, and author of *Empty Womb, Aching Heart* (Bethany House, 2001).

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"Christianity is Wine"

It is permissible to use wine, not only for necessity, but also to make us merry
— John Calvin



by Joseph C. McLelland

"Islam is coffee, Buddhism is tea, Christianity is wine." That old saying reflects a certain truth about these three world religions, their cultural roots and symbolism. It shows each tradition featuring a ritual of fellowship, gathering around a special ceremony of hospitality and the celebration of life.

Coffee comes from the "middle world" of Islam, from the tents of Arabian hospitality, the breath of a community originally nomadic — remember the great tents in *Lawrence of Arabia*? (It is also useful as a stimulant to keep one awake for night-time prayers.)

The tea ceremony in Eastern Buddhism is strongest in Japan where it becomes a veritable "way of tea" (*chado*) involving 24 instruments used with great formality. The Tearoom is sacred space, symbolizing the harmony of Heaven with the elements of Earth. It is thus a master art and a way of liberation.

Wine holds special place in Christianity because of its Jewish roots, where bread stands for food and wine for gladness. One of John Calvin's favourite verses was Psalm 104:14b-15a: "You … bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the human heart." He should know — his stipend in Geneva was some cash plus a substantial amount of wine. Curiously, when Presbyterians began to worship in Montreal over 200 years ago, they used the church of St. Gabriel and made a donation of wine to the Roman Catholic priests in gratitude. Calvin wrote: "It is permissible to use wine, not only for necessity, but also to make us merry." God intends to "delight us with his delicacies," making us merry so that we may "feel a livelier gratitude to God." Of course, he enjoins moderation in such lawful use.

The Lord's Supper holds central place in Christian liturgy, along with preaching. The Word of God becomes audible

in sermon and visible in sacraments. Together, Word and Sacrament convey the proclamation of God's grace and the human response it calls forth: grace begets gratitude. In Greek, "grace" is *charis* and "thanksgiving" is *eucharistia* (in Greece, today, one hears *efaristo* regularly; that is, "thanks"). So our weekly praise and thanksgiving form the "eucharistic sacrifice" due to God for his covenant love.

The original word for sacrament was "mystery," the Greek term still preferred in Eastern Orthodoxy. The ancient Father Origen wrote: "For the body of the Divine Logos or his blood, what else can they be than the word which nourishes and the word which gladdens the hearts?" He also calls Communion "the Word which saturates and inebriates the hearts of those that drink it." Others also noted the intoxicating power of the wine. That's why theologian Paul Tillich, when asked why unfermented grape juice shouldn't be used in the Lord's Supper, replied, "Because wine has *power*!"

The Lord's Supper or Eucharist is a communal meal, a shared feast. Certainly it's no picnic — these token bits of bread and wine are not enough to satisfy the belly. And that's the point: it is meant to unsettle us, prepare us for an embattled journey, a disputed passage. "Iron Rations of a Christian," a German theologian once called these elements, recalling the frontline fare of the Great War. Christ's very body and blood on display as it were. Here is no place for sentiment, or watering down (!) this rich tradition of sacrificial memory and thanksgiving. Its deep meaning and high power strike us speechless, like Paul on the Damascus Road, or like Luther trembling as he lifted the chalice in his first Communion as a priest. It's an invasion of our self-centred lives, our acquisitive society, our hypocritical spirituality.

Communion — "common union" — unites us with Christ, the church's Head, *and, therefore,* inexorably and most assuredly with one another — with every "other" for whom he died. Look around you at your next eucharistic service: those others are one flesh with you, whether you like it or not, whether you think them worthy of your friendship or not. Do you "discern the Lord's body" in them? Be careful! As you judge these others, these little ones for whom Christ sacrificed himself in *charis*, so will you be judged as to the sincerity of your *eucharistia*. No wonder our Scottish forebears handed out their Communion tokens sparingly according to one's manner of life (which the elders must guarantee). On the tokens was stamped those dreaded words, "Examine yourself, lest you eat and drink judgment" or "Discern the Lord's body!" (I Corinthians 11:27-29).

Thanksgiving: the theme of Christian life, a sacrifice of perpetual praise. We lay claim to this heritage of life-affirming celebration, purchased at cost, for which red wine has proved the best symbol. The chalice that once formed the legend of the Holy Grail of chivalrous quest is now ours for the taking. We are like knights of a round table, all equal in dignity and worth here. So do we echo the Jewish toast *L'Chaim*! — To life! R

Joseph C. McLelland is emeritus professor of McGill University and The Presbyterian College, Montreal, and a contributing editor of this magazine.

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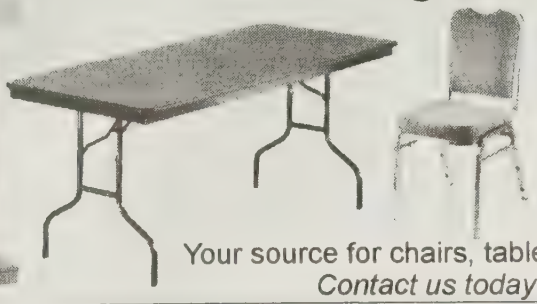
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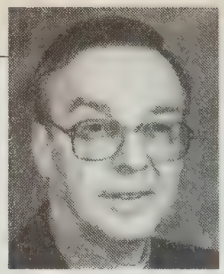
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Ted Siverns



The crook, the crisis & the Kingdom

Are we guilty of mismanagement and fraud as stewards of God's Kingdom?

Luke 16:1-13

Jesus still gets into trouble with his parables. This story is about a character who, at the beginning, was suspected of incompetence but, by the end, showed himself to be an incorrigible scamp, a barefaced embezzler and an opportunist of the first order. A smart man, said Jesus. You should be so smart.

Typical of a good story, there are three parts. In part one, a man who was a manager or "steward" was caught mismanaging funds. The man was in a predicament. His professional reputation was about to be shattered by a public scandal and he would be, as we might say, "ruined for life."

What was the man to do? Management was the one thing he was good at — or not good at, depending on your perspective. "I'm not accustomed to work in the field," he said. In the words of the parable: "I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg." Sudden lack of opportunity was rapidly occurring. The promise of big time trouble and the short, descriptive word "crisis" ends part one.

The response comes in part two. The steward could sit idly by and watch the world burn around him; that's a common approach to crisis. He could close his eyes and, maybe, the problem would go away; but the problem was not going to silently slouch south. Probably the most-used English phrases spoken in the world are "OK" and "No problem." Well, it wasn't OK and there was a problem.

The manager decided on a plan. He resolved to act. The issue was survival by hook or by crook. He called in those indebted to the company and offered to settle accounts with them advantageously. "As you know, I'm the manager of the Jerusalem Bank & Finance Company. Your mortgage is for $200,000. Renew today and I'll write it down to $60,000." "You owe us $25,000? I've got a special deal for you. We'll take $8,000 if you'll just sign on the dotted line." "Your car loan? Would two per cent interest be too much, dear friend?" We might call this "creative financing" or "how to make friends that will see you from a crisis to a new future."

The issue was survival by hook or by crook

First, the crisis; then, the response; now, part three: the improved situation. The steward realized there was a crisis and acted quickly to plan a new future. Now he had people who were indebted to him. Congratulations! Congratulations by none other than the boss himself. Congratulated for making a smart move in the nick of time. The man acted before it was too late.

He was astute; he was clever. He was a rogue, but his boss knew the game. For many people, the resourceful rascal's realization of what was necessary to survive is what life requires, and they play the game well. The Middle East is still full of stories of shrewd characters and cunning tricks; it goes with the territory.

We expect the parable to have *one* significant point or, in the words of Samuel Johnson, "A figure of speech must not be required to run on all four legs." What is the point? You should think about this for awhile for parables are not finished works but stories that continue to address and challenge the listener — or, in our time, the reader.

Could we agree the parable has something to do with the Reign (Kingdom) of God? Does it somehow assume God is the owner, the Boss of life, and we are stewards, managers on behalf of the Owner? Does it suggest we have mismanaged our resources and the Owner has discovered our fraudulent handling of the accounts? Is it fair to say that Jesus, Chief Agent of the Boss, creates a crisis by calling us to account, asking us to consider the life we have been given and how we have managed it?

It doesn't always look like God is in control. It may not seem that God will ever be able to check the books; but the New Testament insists that, in the final analysis, we are accountable to the Owner.

Most of us live life as if there were no Boss, no God, and that we are not stewards but owners. Could it be that, before God, we are in the same position of crisis as was this steward? R

For discussion and reflection

- Why is the steward called astute? See Luke 19:1-10 for a comparison.
- Do you see a connection between the parable and the words of W. B. Yeats: "The worst are full of passionate intensity/ the best lack all conviction." Or Frederick Buechner's: "The point of the Unjust Servant is that it's better to be a resourceful rascal than a saintly schlemiel ... "?

L. E. (Ted) Siverns is the minister of First Church in New Westminster, B.C.

Four true stories

about the lives of Presbyterian laity

About Buzz Lightyear and King David

Wilson Coneybeare

I first walked into Glenview Presbyterian Church in Toronto less than two years ago. This is the sum total of my church-going experience. I recently struck up a conversation with a long-time member. I told her I was in my mid-thirties, that my wife Lisa and I had joined the church only recently and that we had three children under five.

"Ah," she said. "You came after the kids were born. That happens a lot."

"It does?"

"Yes. People have kids, then realize that they ought to set some sort of an example, so they start going to church again."

"Actually, no," I said. "What happened was, when our child was born, I looked into his eyes and understood for the first time the existence of God."

For those of you who have grown up with faith and have always been comfortable attending some sort of church, you have my sincerest sympathy: you have missed entirely the experience of believing in nothing but yourself. But you may have also missed this astonishing discovery: it is not easy being a Christian family in Canada in 2001. I did not grow up around people of faith.

So why did my wife and I walk into Glenview? The short answer is that we were ready. But we soon found ourselves facing a surprising contradiction: church life and life. For so many of my generation, what's easy to say on Sunday is not so easy to put into practice on Monday. I realized that if I were truly to be a Christian, then that is not how I wanted to live my life.

How to practice what one believes! Ironically, while we sent our kids off to church school so we could wrestle with this problem, our children were finding the answer for us. Our eldest child is now 5. One day, he was talking about the importance of super heroes. My wife asked him exactly who his super heroes were. He rhymed off a list easily: "Buzz Lightyear, Superman, King David and Batman." To him this list made perfect sense. His view of the solar system is equally liberal. He can name all of the planets as well as the various gaseous explosions and supernovas that went into their creation. And yet, amongst this intense science, he tells me that "God made all this."

He has found the appropriate tools to deal with both his home life and the attendant faith and the challenges presented by the outside world. Buzz Lightyear definitely, but also King David definitely. He asks to be read the Bible at story time, followed by Franklin and his Halloween adventure, clearly melding two worlds. But of course they're not two worlds. That's the thing. He is, unknowingly, making the statement that Christian faith is not something in his life, it is his life—wholly integrated in both thought and deed.

Here comes an irony. I am a filmmaker by trade and one area of my career has found considerable success in children's programs. I have had shows on the major networks in both Canada and the United States but I never quite saw the sheer usefulness of this job until my son made the Buzz Lightyear-King David connection for me. Here, I thought, is where I am able to clarify and act out my own moral, ethical and spiritual beliefs.

And here is where I can consciously stake out my own claim. I think that my new adventure series about world history, or my series about two shrinking teenagers who explore the world of science and nature, will allow me to show that the values I believe in are intertwined with my faith. I hope this will be true in all I tackle, from television to feature films to theatre.

So there's the irony. What we gave to the children, they gave back to us, and literally I many be giving back to them—this time, however, in slightly larger numbers. For me, that is a neat metaphor for the eyclical nature of acts of faith, and spiritual and ethical endeavor.

Christian faith is not something in life, it *is* life.

This is where God called me to be

Catherine Inglis

In the church, where all are saints, are we not all called equally to different tasks, whether within or outside of the church? I remember hearing, not long ago, that in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, there is no "laity" and "clergy" distinction, but we are all one in Christ Jesus. That's all very good to say, but in reality, most of us are aware that there is a difference.



Catherine Inglis (centre) while volunteering in India.

Who are "lay people"? Lay people are those who serve Christ outside of ordained ministry. They often work behind the scenes in the church community, taking little or no credit for their hours of quiet labour. Or they work in a chosen profession outside of the church.

My primary church focus over the past few years has been in two areas: youth ministry and social and global justice issues. I have found that the best way for me to get involved in the church is through ministry with children and youth. This just happens to be my forte, which has led me to a career in education. Over the past five or six years, I've focused most of my time teaching Sunday school and leading youth groups for pre-teens and teens. I have also taken part in some smaller programs such as mentoring confirmation-age youths, mission and outreach in its various forms, and helping to plan special worship services, usually involving young people.

I serve on the advisory committee of the Youth In Mission program and on the editorial committee for A New Network. In an ecumenical church setting, I work with the Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries, helping to prepare children of missionaries for life overseas.

But a large part of my ministry is done exclusive of the church; as a teacher. I know that this is where God has called me to be.

It is easy to list a lot of things I've done with children and youth in my churches. There are hundreds of volunteers just like me who are doing much the same. It is less commonplace, however, to find a church environment where, as a lay person, you have the freedom to program and plan. This is what true laity equipping means to me: to be given the trust and support of the "powers that be" in your church, in order to make programs meaningful.

I have worked with clergy and sessions who have thankfully determined that the wisdom, of even one as young as I, is valuable. One important element of equipping laity is that leaders find creative ways to hand over some of their "power" to laity. We all know —or at least we have heard of —ministers who have trouble "letting go". This year, we ask our hard-working colleagues in the ordained ministry to help us equip the non-theologically trained among us, so that the work load will ultimately be easier.

Together, we are called to let the Holy Spirit enter into all of our work. Trust the Spirit to lead your congregation.

I have been told from a very young age that we all have a ministry to give, whether it be a formal ministry of the church as an ordained person or out in the larger world. My Sunday school teachers—great lay people, those—have instilled this notion of a community of faith where, no matter what the training or skills, we all have something to contribute.

I have a simple request: appreciate the hard work that lay people are doing in your church. We work hard, usually for little or no recognition. We do it because this church is important to us.

And please stop asking me when I am planning to go to Knox College, or Presbyterian College, or St. Andrew's. I am already engaged in ministry. God calls us, too! Just because I don't wear a collar, or didn't spend my university years learning Aramaic, does not mean that I haven't had to struggle to find my calling, too. We lay people are committed to the church, as much as ordained clergy, but we know where we can best serve. Which is the point. When we properly equip the laity to be confident in their choices in ministry, we will truly have a strong and vibrant church.

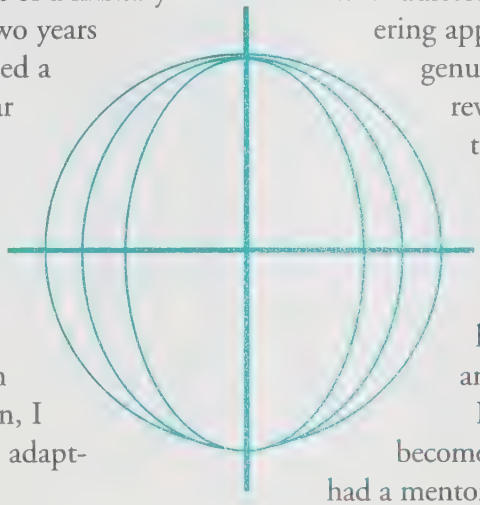
We all have a 'ministry' to give.

I became involved because I was asked. I had a mentor.

Alison Coke

When I was asked to think about why I volunteer in the Presbyterian World Service and Development Committee, many things went through my mind. Part of the reason I am interested in being involved in this work is because of my background— understanding what it is to be a stranger.

I am an army brat, the child of a military family who has moved every two years of my life for 16 years. I learned a lot, but two things in particular have made a difference in my faith journey. Wherever I moved, I was in the minority; the new kid from 'somewhere else'. I understood how it feels to be an outsider and, in order to survive and flourish in such an ephemeral life situation, I simply had to become flexible, adaptable and tolerant.



As a perpetual stranger, I understood how it felt to be 'from away' or disadvantaged in the established order and this has given me a natural political, if not truly practical, affinity and solidarity for those whose lives are on the periphery. I do not pretend to appreciate the grinding grief of the world's poor but in a very modest way, I know what it is to feel 'less'.

I am also involved because of long-standing involvement in international studies and academic interest in development issues and problems. I studied political science and economics at university and so, even if it only on an academic level, I have enjoyed a privileged exposure to economic development issues and concerns.

There is no doubt that my minister played a key role because of who he is and the trouble he took to help me find this opportunity to serve. This has been very important. Certainly my minister, Rev. Bill Middleton, and the leadership at my church (Armour Heights) have profoundly affected my involvement in this work and in my faith community. The minister took the trouble to get to know me. He found out that I studied development economics at Oxford and was working as the senior economist at the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

When Rev. Rick Fee (director of PWS&D) came to our church to preach, Rev. Middleton made sure I was introduced and, as they say, the rest is history.

Rev. Middleton takes a proactive and empowering approach to lay activity. He is genuinely interested in finding and revealing the gifts and interests of the congregation and giving these a chance to be put to use. I would not have had the chance to serve on the PWS&D Committee without his active support, confidence and intervention.

In its most simple term, I have become involved because I was asked. I had a mentor.

I am involved because I have seen the difference that our church projects make in the lives of people who really need help. A few years ago, I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to visit Central America and to meet with our partners there to see for myself the kind of work that The Presbyterian Church in Canada is involved in in this beautiful but very troubled region of the world. I saw street children learning in schools conceived in hope and faith and held together by love, courage and determination. PWS&D sponsors this initiative.

Finally, I am involved in the work of the church because of my faith and what I believe Jesus expects of me as a Christian—to put my strength, energy and talents to work on behalf of my neighbour.

When combined with my own personal psychology (the empathy with strangers and those 'out of place'), my commitment to the study of international issues and concerns, my genuine good fortune in having a very supportive minister and incredible program leader like Rick Fee at the helm, the opportunity was undeniable.

The minister took the trouble to get to know me.

I strongly feel the hand of God in my life

Valerie M. Dunn

I'm the editor/publisher of my own newspaper, called Hi-Rise, a monthly serving apartments and townhouses in the Greater Toronto area. I just interviewed a young woman who wants to become a student volunteer.

I told her thatI gained many of my reporting and editing skills by doing volunteer reporting and editing work for the church, particularly in the Presbyterian Young People's Society.

Shainas is an Ismaili Muslim. She plans a journalism career, and is excited about developing her skills as a volunteer.

Her hopes and dreams reminded me so much of my own at that age. For I know that God provided me with all the tools I needed to do the work he was calling me to do. That was one of the reasons I knew he WAS calling me! Journalism school was impossible for financial reasons, so He provided other ways to acquire the skills I needed.

In time, my volunteer activities led to my being offered a job as an administrative assistant with the Women's Missionary Society where I came in contact with people who were skilled educators, like Ada Adams, Mabel Booth, Louise Reith, and Margaret Webster. They taught me how to teach, lead workshops, run conferences, and take minutes of the annual council and executive meetings.

Then I joined the staff of The Presbyterian Record as an editorial assistant, working with DeCourcy H. Rayner. I plunged into reporting, layout, editing, and photography. Anything I didn't know I was encouraged to learn, and I took many evening and summer courses.

When I left, 16 years later, I was the assistant editor, with many skills, not least among them learning to report the activities of successive General Assemblies.

In all of these things, I strongly felt the hand of God in my life, leading me from one job to the next. But then came a challenge I didn't expect. I started to feel I needed to use my skills outside the church, in the wider community. But how?

I considered many jobs but none appealed to me. Without realizing it, I found myself seriously considering self-employment. To my great surprise, once I took this step, the floodgates opened. I found myself as a part-time editor of a small newspaper, and other clients knocking at the door. Obviously, God wanted me to take this risky step. As I told some friends, "I felt like there was a tiger snapping at my back; in front was a steep cliff, and I was expected to take a step over it!" That is exactly what God wanted me to do. Within a year, I had over 20 non-profit clients, helping them with their communications needs.

Five years later my career took another turn, and I established the newspaper I am operating today, called Hi-Rise. Twenty-one years later I am still at it, and more than ever aware that God is totally in charge of my days. Every day is a new risk, a new challenge, and must be based on prayer, or otherwise I soon get off course.



There are times when I wonder if God really wants me to continue doing this. Then He clearly shows me that, yes, He does. Money arrives just when I need it, so does help, or new insights and directions.

Every day is a new challenge, and must be based on prayer.

Produced by
Resource Production
and Communication,
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Mary Ingram

Life's checkpoints

Reflecting on God's grace through a mission experience in Mexico

For the past two summers, I have been a leader with Presbyterian youth from British Columbia on Mexico mission trips to Clinica La Esperanza near San Quintin, Mexico. This mission is operated by Mexican Medical Ministries. It works with the community to provide medical services and evangelism ministry to the nearby migrant workers camps. Many short-term mission teams from all over North America work with missionaries in San Quintin.

As I was reading through my journal the other day, I came across a few excerpts I want to share. I do not share them for you to say "Isn't that great!" or "Oh, but she was there for only 10 days!" Rather, read them and think of your own relationship with God.

God speaks in many ways whether in Mexico or Canada, on the inner-city streets or the shores of the ocean. Where do you hear God? Is God muddled up with everything else that is noisy in your life? Or are you open to God's voice in your daily life? I learn about my Lord everywhere, and Mexico was no exception.

"These children are covered with fleas and lice, are plagued with disease and, often, have nothing on except a shirt. But they are exactly the same as you and I in God's eyes. Janine found a little girl today on the outskirts of the playground area. Janine called me over because she said she did not know what to do. This little girl was covered and caked in mud and sores, bawling her eyes out. I suggested picking her up. When Janine did that, the crying stopped; but she still did not know what to do when the crying started again. Then, Janine knelt down and cradled her, singing, *'Cristo me ama'* — 'Jesus loves me.' The crying stopped."

"My eyes hurt — I am sure my contact lenses are diseased. Every part of my clothes and me is dirty. My hair is a lost cause. I have just stuck it under a bandanna all week. My face has changed to a deep shade of brown. I don't even *want* to be clean, right now. The feeling of sand all over me and the smell of this disgusting shirt that I have worked in all week are … wonderful!"

God speaks in many ways whether in Mexico or Canada, on the inner-city streets or the shores of the ocean.

Where do you hear God?

"I love this place. I love that it is beautiful and barren, relatively untouched by commercialism. This is a forgotten landscape of nomads and tomato plantations. But I keep being reminded that God is so huge! God does miracles here daily. Last night, before dinner, we travelled about 10 miles south of here to a piece of land that had been donated to Pastor Raphael. Raphael is the man who was here before Mexican Medical even showed up. He has had a vision for another church to be built near San Quintin. Through a few miracles and a donation, there is now a site. There was such incredible joy as we dedicated the land to the Lord, *'Gloria a Dios.'* As all 90 of us stood in a circle, we prayed Spanish and English prayers. Then, we walked and prayed. About 400 metres from where we stood were the cliffs leading down to the crashing waves of the Pacific Ocean. It was about 5:30. The late afternoon sun was hot but refreshing with the ocean breeze.

I put so much into these words so I can try to capture the absolute beauty of Creation and of the power of the Holy Spirit. A few of us stood at this one point on the cliffs with Raphael as he bellowed out his 'Alleluia!' The ground was knelt upon, prayed for and dedicated. I felt like a pioneer in a new land. It was so excellent! As we looked out over the LOUD ocean, a beautiful line of blue herons floated above our heads. God is such an artist!"

"This morning, I was running with a friend on the beach near the Mexican Medical compound. It was a cloudy morning but so full of ocean smells, air and mist. Near the end of our run, I saw the yellow, rusted row-boat way up ahead that I had sat in the night before as the sun was setting. Now, it was alone, just coming clear out of the mist ahead of me. I wanted to be able to sprint at the end, so I decided I would 'pour it on' when I reached the boat. In my mind, I was about 200-300 metres from the boat. I kept running but, then, I saw an old truck rumble up. I watched a Mexican attach the boat to the back of the truck … and take it away! Agh! No checkpoint for me to know when to sprint! I reached the place where we had parked and rested.

As Christians, we often strive for checkpoints in our spiritual walk. We think that, if we could only get past

something or if we could only get things a little more straightened out, we would have it all together and the energy to pour it on. We do need to stop to refresh, but we never do stop striving to the goal. We never stop growing spiritually. When we get to places like those checkpoints, we usually realize how much more we have to travel. I believe 'I can do everything through him who gives me strength' (Philippians 4:13). I am excited to meet those next challenges because God is in me, giving me strength to do everything. Ready to go, God! Lead me on … " R

Mary Ingram began her work as director of the Youth in Mission program of The Presbyterian Church in Canada this month.

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Douglas Lowry

Marjorie Griffin: an educated person

At age 78, she was still host of a television talk show on a cable network

The college years are a time for many decisions. It's not only having to choose among courses and programs and activities. University provides a setting to deal with deep issues. What really matters to me? Who and what do I want to become? What does it mean to be an educated person?

It is not likely we could put together a list (courses, degrees, qualities or whatever) that would form a satisfactory definition of an educated person. Personal examples are more helpful than lists. The concept of saintliness takes on meaning when it is incarnated in saintly people. In the same way, we can learn about life by considering the lives of educated people. No two educated people are exactly alike; each offers different insights. We learn as we look for patterns and principles that emerge among many examples. Permit me to offer one.

Marjorie Griffin studied at Blackburn College in Carlinville, Illinois, in the early 1920s. Blackburn was a liberal arts college with Presbyterian heritage. A fundamental theme at Blackburn (still in place today) is the combination of intellectual development with service. It pioneered the idea of student work opportunities. Students are taught the dignity and educational value of offsetting the cost of education by taking a part in the university's day-to-day operations. In her student days, Marjorie ran the laundry and was secretary to Prexy (Blackburn's president), Dr. Hudson. Students took turns in the kitchen as well. When her name appeared on the roster for Sunday breakfast, she would be up in the early hours to prepare hundreds of cinnamon rolls.

Marjorie's father disapproved of her time at Blackburn. Herman Griffin believed education for women was a waste. Marjorie thought otherwise. She was into everything. She learned about writing and tested her new skills by writing in the student paper. Her column was a chat piece called "The Champus Cat." Here is "Charlie's List of the Heaven-Bound," a slice of doggerel she used to chide an overly zealous pre-theology student:



O hark ye all and give attention
For Charlie's list we here give mention.
But very few hear the trumpet sound
And march with Charlie heaven-bound.

The breakfast cooks were crossed off to a man
For throwing burnt biscuits in the garbage can.
Fred Jones is hiding under the table
Because he married before he was able.

Mary Lou Smith, one sad, sad day,
Some jazzy music was heard to play.
Anyone foolish enough to dance
On Charlie's list doesn't stand a chance.

If Catholic by chance your parents be,
You will shovel coal through eternity.
St. Peter's gates will open wide
For those who are on Charlie's side.

Sadly, few indeed hear the trumpet sound,
And march with Charlie, heaven-bound.

(Incidentally, Charlie loved it.)

Marjorie took her associate's degree from Blackburn and became a dietitian in a large nursing home. After a couple of years, she married a Canadian man 10 years her senior.

Let's fast-forward to the mid-1930s. Under the pseudonym Marjorie Kennedy, she was writing again, now a column entitled "Home Chats" for the Toronto Free Press. She gave pseudonyms to her growing brood and wrote about child-raising. She was far ahead of her time. She taught values, especially the dignity and worth of the child. She portrayed child-raising as the most important work on this earth, shaping the next generation. On the subject of education for girls and women, she came out strongly: "Teach a man, and you teach an individual. Teach a woman, and you teach a family and a generation."

Fast-forward again, now to 1942. Marjorie was left by herself to raise six children, ages 4 to 14. She refused welfare. Her sense of responsibility led her to enter the work-force full time *and* to spend the equivalent of a second shift with her children. Working mothers still

had to endure poverty; at times, she was reduced to two rooms for her family and a bathroom shared with another family down the hall. In all of this, she held before her children the dignity of the person and each person's responsibility to secure an education that would lift them to be part of the solution rather than part of the problems in this world.

Fast-forward into the next decade, the 1950s. She believed in continuous learning, so she went to night-school to brush up her accounting skills. By the end of the decade, she was teaching it. During the day, she was the office manager, then the accountant for a fast-growing automotive parts firm. Rising eventually to secretary-treasurer, she had to overcome all the put-downs and abuse that were part of workplace life before it became fashionable for women to be senior executives.

In the 1950s, she went out of her way to develop people skills. She could (and would) strike up a conversation with almost anyone. She learned compassionate listening for her staff and for complete strangers. She continued to write. Her files from that period show pieces on Mother Cabrini and other of her lifelong heroes.

She worked through the 1960s as a secretary-treasurer and, with her children out of the nest, she had more time for travel in Germany and Great Britain as well as in the United States and Canada. Her sense of history flowered. On the faith side of her life, she was ordained as a Presbyterian elder at Westminster Church in Scarborough, Ontario, one of the first women elders in Canada. She took the role seriously, preaching in senior citizen homes and in occasional church services, plus serving on local and presbytery committees.

Marjorie "retired" at age 68 from her day job. And she was off and running. Her love for people led her immediately into volunteer counselling in rehab settings. She set out to improve her public speaking through the Toastmistress Club. She plunged more into church life, three times serving as a commissioner to the General Assembly. This whirlwind of activity continued through the 1970s. At age 78, she was still host of a television talk show on a cable network.

The 1980s were the wisdom years, the writing years. In her writing, she tried to "put it all together," to integrate what she had learned (so far!) from life, and what matters. Her faith grew yet deeper. She had always taught the importance of investing in people. In 1983-84, she sacrificed part of her meagre savings to send one of her 18 grandchildren to Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio.

The 1990s were times of "being rather than doing." This is difficult for someone accustomed to achieving rather than easing up, giving rather than receiving. She kept on learning. But, finally, at age 96 and a half, she had to give up living independently. With this change in June 1998, she decided she was ready for Home. In her pain, she shared with others her meditations on the pains of Christ.

Majorie Griffin's life spanned the 20th century. She was born in 1901, the year Queen Victoria died and President McKinley was shot. The first aeroplane flight was still in the future.

What is an educated person? People who will shape the 21st century can draw some guidance from those who have been on the front lines of change through the 20th century. An educated person has learned how to learn, to listen, to love, to think clearly, to look for worth in every person and to persist in difficulty.

What is Marjorie Griffin doing now? On Friday, September 11, 1998, the psalm response in the noon liturgy was: "How lovely is your dwelling-place, Lord Mighty God." The refrain of the last hymn was:

"I will fight the good fight,
with all my heart and soul,
till the day that I'm with Jesus,
the day I'm finally home,
the day that I have won the crown."

Our destination is that lovely dwelling-place of God. Marjorie Kennedy Griffin Lowry died Thursday evening, September 10, 1998. She is off on the next great adventure. Enjoy it, Mom! We honor you, an educated woman, for all you have taught us about life. R

Douglas Lowry, a former clerk of the General Assembly, now teaches at the Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio.

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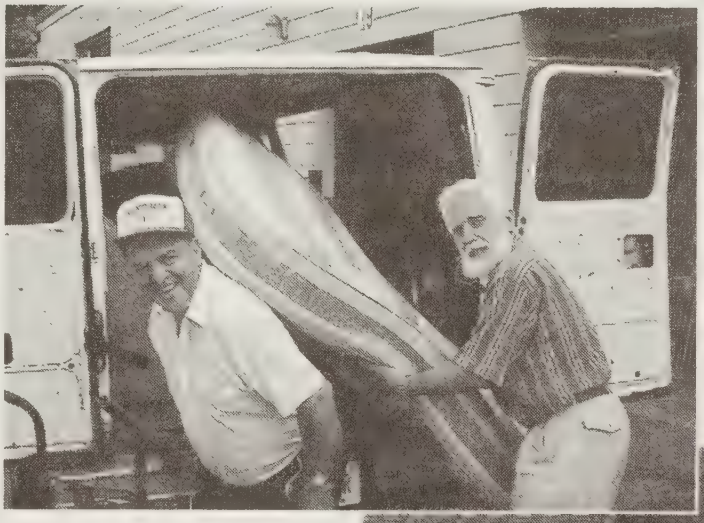
The Caring Alliance:
Keeping hope alive

Churches go together to befriend people who are homeless or refugees

Homelessness continues to grow in Toronto. It is still a national disgrace. The Toronto economy has strengthened in recent years, with the unemployment rate dropping and the number of people drawing welfare falling. But despite this statistical improvement, the number of homeless and low-income people — the working poor — continues to rise. While rents continue to rise steadily, there has been little or no increase in incomes at the lower end. Renting now costs as much as $1,000 a month for a two-bedroom apartment or $1,200 for three bedrooms.

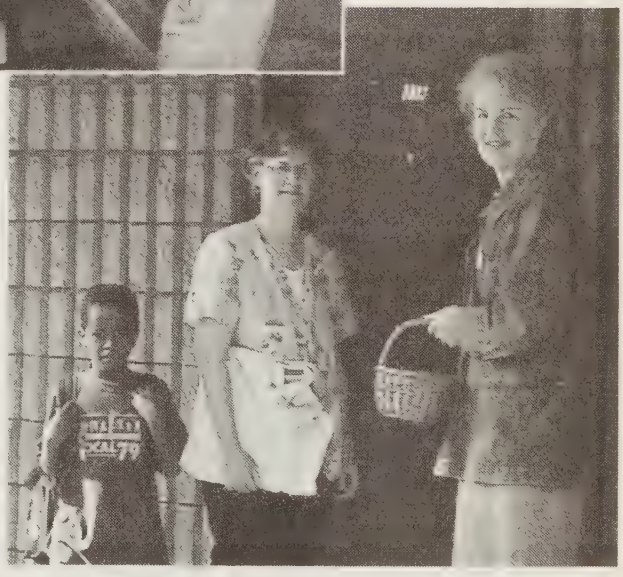
There are now about 30,000 homeless people using shelters in Toronto. Although most are single men, the most rapidly growing segment of homeless people is families — two-parent and single-parent families. That number has grown from about 400 in 1980 to 2,000 families today. An alarmingly high number of children use the food banks — 50,000 a year in Toronto alone, 40 per cent of all food bank users.

The Kingston Road Strip in the east end of Toronto, an area of about two dozen motels, houses some of the families. At present, there are 700 residents in these motels, but the number in the past has been as high as 1,100. These are a mix of refugee claimants, abused wives and their children, those escaping from family breakdown and, at times, people recovering from a personal tragedy such as a fire. They are lonely, dispirited people with a sense of rejection. They have been told often they are failures. With the exception of the refugees, most have low self-esteem and many have given up hope. They are depressed and isolated. Many of the refugees, still suffering from the trauma of war and persecution, even encounter racist demonstrations outside the motels.



Left: **Tim (left), a volunteer driver, unloads furniture with the help of Helmut Bayer, The Caring Alliance's furniture bank co-coordinator.**

Below: **Lucy Howell (centre) and Jean Swagerman pay a visit to friends in a motel.**



Local service providers, health and social workers, and the education system face increased demands. They do a remarkable job, but the people need more. They need someone else to help them feel loved, valued and important.

In the spring of 1997, The Caring Alliance came together to offer support to the residents of the motels. Its motto: "Keeping hope alive." This large, active group of volunteers from 22 congregations and representing eight denominations, including Presbyterians, works closely with representatives of local support agencies such as public health nurses. More than 120 volunteers work with and for these homeless people.

The frontline effort is the "Adopt-a-Motel" program. A congregation "adopts" one of the many hotels housing homeless people. Members visit regularly and befriend them. They help in the ways we all help friends — by listening, advising, acting as a chauffeur, praying with and for them, and with little gifts. They invite the motel residents to their homes for special occasions — there are some wonderfully happy Christmas photographs. They invite them to their church, and some have

become regular worshippers. They organize baby showers, an unknown concept in some of their home countries. Intergenerational games events are held for residents and members of the congregation.

When families move into a place of their own, they have no furniture. Even those not refugees have disposed of any furniture they had because of the expense for storing it. The Caring Alliance helps through the furniture bank, which it runs in conjunction with West Hill Community Services. It collects and stores good used furniture from individuals — members of supporting congregations and the community as they upgrade or move — and from institutions such as hotels which change their furniture every couple of years. It is then delivered to the new home, giving the family a better chance to start anew and begin contributing back to society.

It is particularly difficult to help children in these circumstances. They do not understand what is happening. They feel deprived and deserted — they have often lost a parent and they are in a new school without friends. Many refugees have little English. Their peers, knowing their stay will be a brief two or three months, often make little or no effort to befriend them. So the motel visitors always make an extra effort to include the children in their visiting, sometimes bringing little gifts or treats.

But there is one program especially for children: "Operation Backpack." One of the most important possessions of schoolchildren is the backpack. But this is usually beyond the means of most motel residents. Churches within The Caring Alliance buy backpacks and fill them with school supplies and other items. The children then have something of their own and no longer stand out as different.

Changes can happen when good people act.
Small acts carried out by many people
can transform the world

Often a relationship between the church visitor and the family develops and continues after the family moves. The visitor is invited to weddings and other family celebrations. Visitors often feel they benefit as much or even more in an emotional and spiritual way than those they visit.

The Caring Alliance is well aware these measures, helpful and encouraging and uplifting as they are, do not solve the problems. They understand that, although Jesus stated that people who are poor would always be among us, this is no excuse for accepting the present situation. Changes can happen when good people act. Small acts carried out by many people can transform the world.

The Caring Alliance is active in informing the community of the facts about homelessness. The group has speakers who address congregations and organizations. They encourage people to pressure their politicians. The Caring Alliance meets annually with politicians at all three levels of government to exchange ideas and to keep the issue alive. Federal member of Parliament John McKay credits The Caring Alliance with influencing federal policy and funding. Steve Gilchrist, a member of the Ontario legislature, suggested building homes for low-income people to buy. This is being followed up. The Caring Alliance is promoting a system of home ownership based on similar financial strategies established by Habitat for Humanity. If more housing becomes available, it will alleviate some of the problem.

The Caring Alliance is an ecumenical mission working to help those who are poor. It works because many individuals from different denominations use their various talents to serve others. R

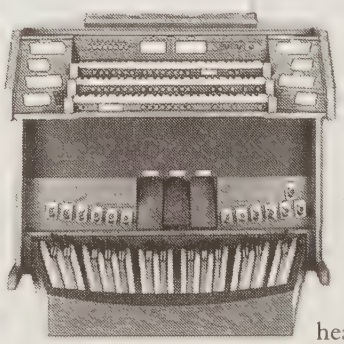
David Parker is a member of Melville Church in West Hill, Ont.

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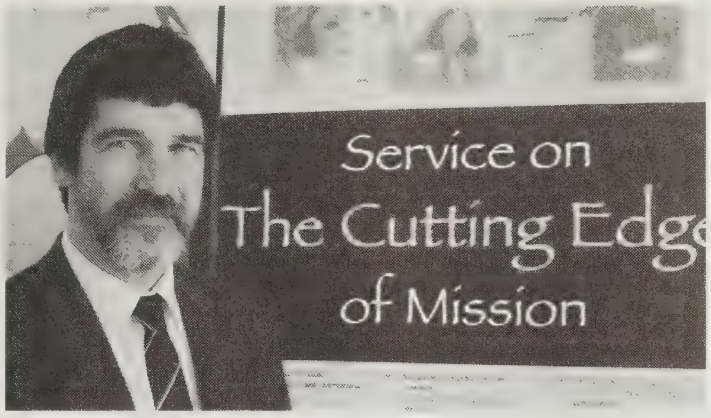


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David Pandy-Szekeres receives E. H. Johnson Award



David Pandy-Szekeres is the second person from Eastern Europe in recent years to win the E. H. Johnson Award for mission on the cutting edge.

David was born in Hamilton and grew up in Delhi, Ontario, son of Laszlo Pandy-Szekeres, a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. He is a graduate of the University of Toronto as well as the University of Bordeaux, France, and from the Reformed theological seminary in Budapest.

In the late 1970s, he went to Hungary and, during the last years of the Communist era, played an active role in the Hungarian Reformed Church and its efforts to reform itself. During that period, he also took part in relief operations, often taking relief supplies and people from Hungary across the border into Romania at great risk.

David now lives in Ukraine with his wife, Anna, and their three young children. He is active in establishing Christian schools for the Hungarian-speaking minority in Ukraine as well as serving as supervisor of missions, general director of schools, and public relations officer for the Reformed Church of the sub-Carpathian Ukraine. He has been active in attempting to bring renewal to border churches that had been isolated and neglected during the Communist regimes. Since 1987, he has organized summer camps for disadvantaged children and orphans in Hungary, Romania and Croatia.

The award was presented to David on June 5 at a luncheon held at York University during the meetings of the 127th General Assembly. Present for the ceremony were David's mother, his sister and his two brothers and their families. Also present for the occasion were Rev. Russell and Margaret Hall who initially discovered Laszlo Pandy while visiting patients in the hospital in Tisdale, Saskatchewan, shortly after the Pandys had immigrated to Canada.

When introducing David, Marjorie Ross said that most recipients of the award have been either one of our own or someone from a partner church. "David Pandy-Szekeres," she said, "is the first person to be both one of us and one of them."

The luncheon began with Rev. Ronald Mulchey, a member of the trustees of the fund, recalling personal remembrances of E. H. Johnson. "He inspired me," Mulchey recalled, "to sign up for Nigeria." However, the Nigerian civil war intervened. Later, he served as a co-worker with Ted Johnson at church offices.

In his address, David spoke of Eastern Europe under communism where "those who openly practised their Christian faith too enthusiastically or too devotedly were appropriately bridled" and where "the Christian faith was methodically excluded from all aspects of everyday life [and] atheism took hold by attrition."

"The Lord of history had reserved a different vision for this part of the world," he went on, when, in 1989, "the Communist story collapsed beneath the weight of its accumulated sins."

Following that collapse, Christians began to recover the idea of mission both in terms of rebuilding former institutions of the Reformed Church, like schools, and reaching out to generations who have never heard the gospel.

David became the director of the first missionary training school of the Reformed Church of the sub-Carpathian Ukraine. Graduates serve in various areas, including new work in gypsy communities.

David Pandy-Szekeres is now an overseas staff member with International Ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. He is the 19th winner of the E. H. Johnson Award, the first given in 1983.

WMS appoints new executive secretary

The Women's Missionary Society (WMS) is pleased to announce the appointment of Rev. Yong Mi (Sarah) Kim as executive secretary.



Sarah was born in Seoul, Korea, and immigrated to Canada with her family in 1968. She attended high school in Toronto and graduated from Knox College in 1994 with a Master of Divinity degree. She also took a continuing education course in conflict resolution with John Savage of the Alban Institute.

Since her ordination, Sarah has been minister of Albion Gardens Church, Etobicoke, Ontario. The thought of being involved in Christ's mission in whatever shape or form has always excited Sarah. She felt that God was using her as a missionary in Albion Gardens, and she believes he is now leading her to serve as executive secretary.

"I look forward to working with the WMS at the national level, especially because I have always regarded the WMS as a group that has the mission of Christ at the centre of its mandate, at the centre of its heart," Sarah says. "I am excited at the prospect of being a part of the developing and ongoing work of the WMS."

Sarah lives in Mississauga, Ontario, with her husband, Rev. In Kee Kim, son, Joshua (17), and daughter, Grace (13). Her other interests include classical music and skating.

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A hero's welcome

A large and diverse group gathered at 50 Wynford Drive on June 13 to honour Pauline Brown who received the Order of Canada in May for her work in India. The Order of Canada is the country's highest distinction. It was established in 1967 as a means of recognizing outstanding achievements and honouring those who have given service to Canada, to other citizens or to humanity-at-large.



Pauline Brown (right) with Ida White.

The citation for Pauline reads: "A devoted missionary and public health nurse, she has spent [five] decades working with the underprivileged population in India. She has developed programs and teaching materials aimed at promoting healthy living, family planning and early illness detection. As Director of the Community Health Centre in Mendha and Coordinator of the Village Development Programme of the Diocese of Bhopal, she continues to dedicate herself to the care of the people of India."

During the afternoon festivities, Ida White, who served overseas with Pauline, recalled many humorous and hair-raising anecdotes involving Pauline and her work in India. Doreen Morrison, who also worked with Pauline, presented her with a book of memories.

In her response, Pauline said, "When you do something you enjoy and love and, then, receive recognition for doing it, well, that is the icing on the cake!" She spoke of how we are all called by God's grace and that she looks upon this award as something that honours our whole church.

The motto of the Order of Canada is *desiderantes meliorem patriam* (they desire a better country). The investiture ceremony was held at Government House in Ottawa with the Governor General making the presentation.

"Awake, O sleeper"

The congregation of St. Andrew's Church, Pictou, N.S., wrapped its lightning-damaged steeple in a space-age blanket for the winter after a storm blasted a hole in its south side on Thanksgiving weekend. Many of the town's citizens paused to watch as the blanket was removed recently so that repair work could begin again.



PWS&D/CIDA intern has batteries fully charged

Nicole Hayes, Presbyterian World Service and Development's first CIDA youth intern, recently visited church offices where she gave a presentation on her eight-month assignment in Blantyre, Malawi. Nicole, from Kitchener, Ontario, and a cultural anthropology graduate student at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, worked as a human rights education officer with the Church and Society program of the Blantyre Synod's Projects Office, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. Under the supervision of Rev. Glenn Inglis, a member of International Ministries overseas staff, she had two main responsibilities: sensitizing of Malawian youth to gender issues and Grassroots Voter Education program evaluation.



The PWS&D/CIDA 2000-2001 youth internship program represents an attempt to support the overall goals of the Church and Society (C&S) program of the Blantyre Synod. Established in 1993 in response to major political changes occurring in Malawi, C&S was active in founding the Human Rights Consultative Committee, whose main objective is to strengthen the fragile democracy emerging in Malawi by promoting civic and human rights throughout the Blantyre Synod.

Nicole began her presentation with a look at the beautiful side of Malawi, its landscapes and wildlife. Then, in stark contrast, she focused on the less beautiful and the world of the ordinary citizen in a country where life expectancy is below 40 and the under-five mortality rate is unbelievably high. In Malawi, she pointed out, there is lots to buy but little with which to buy it.

Nicole's obvious enthusiasm for her time in Malawi was, perhaps, most evident when she recalled her work with youth in identifying and discussing gender issues. At the end of the presentation, her computer announced on the projection screen that its batteries were fully charged. It was clear Nicole's were also.

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other news

Commemorating George Leslie Mackay

On June 2, 2001, 300 people gathered in front of Knox Presbyterian Church, Embro, Ontario, for the unveiling of an Ontario Heritage historical plaque. Those gathered were from both Canada and Taiwan and included the local MP, MPP and warden of Oxford County, and representatives of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and The United Church of Canada. Present as well were representatives of the government of Taiwan. All were there to commemorate Rev. Dr. George Leslie Mackay, missionary to Taiwan sent by The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Mackay is regarded as a son-in-law of Taiwan for all he accomplished there and by his marriage to Tsong-min Chang, a Taiwanese woman. During his wanderings through northern Taiwan, he took under his wing a group of young men whom he instructed in the Christian faith. Having some limited dental training, he pulled about 21,000 teeth. He started schools, churches and medical work. During his time as Moderator of the General Assembly (1894-1895), Mackay spoke against the Canadian government's head tax on Chinese immigrants to Canada. To this day, Mackay remains a national hero in Taiwan.

June 2, 2001, marked the 100th anniversary of the death of Mackay. The unveiling of the plaque in Embro coincided with the release of a stamp by the government of Taiwan marking the same event. That Mackay is still held in high regard in Taiwan was evident by the nearly 30 people who travelled from Taiwan to Embro for the unveiling. That high regard extends to the church that sent him and to those Canadians who followed in his footsteps. Mackay's three granddaughters, Anna, Isabel and Margaret Mackay, were hailed as heroes by the crowd gathered in Embro, as were former Presbyterian missionaries to Taiwan such as Wilma Welsh, Diane Osborne (Petrie) and James Sutherland — all of whom were present.

Following the unveiling of the plaque, two busloads of visitors travelled to the Mackay homestead where a tree was planted and wreaths were laid at the site of the old log church that Mackay attended as a boy. A supper was then served in Knox Church and a choir of visitors from Taiwan sang praise to God.

CCJP announces new director

Marjorie Ross, chair of the first board of Canadian Churches for Justice and Peace (CCJP), has announced the appointment of Patricia Steenberg to the position of executive director. She succeeds Jeanne Moffatt, who served as interim executive director of CCJP during a transition period in the new organization's life.

Before assuming her new duties on July 1, Pat was employed as clerk of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance. She has also worked for the CBC as a radio producer and publicist, and with the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. She has a master's degree in public administration and is currently completing a PhD in political science

Canadian Churches for Justice and Peace is an ecumenical, non-profit organization formed by Canadian churches, religious organizations and associated religious bodies to advance their faith witness in support of human rights, economic and ecological justice, viable human development and solidarity among the peoples of the earth. It was created to sustain the work that churches have been doing for the past 25 to 30 years in 10 different ecumenical social justice coalitions. Together, these groups, their staff and the representatives of the sponsoring churches and religious organizations make up one of the largest national policy and advocacy think-tanks in Canada.

PC(USA) moves to delete "fidelity and chastity" provision

By a vote of 317-208, the 213th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has voted to send a proposed constitutional amendment to its presbyteries that would delete G-6.0106b — commonly called the "fidelity and chastity" provision — from the denomination's *Book of Order*.

G-6.0106b — approved by the 1996 General Assembly and ratified 97-74 by the presbyteries — states: *Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders or ministers of the Word and Sacrament.*

The action to delete the provision came after two hours of, what the *General Assembly News* described as, "prayerful and civil" debate.

The General Assembly also voted to render a 23-year-old "authoritative interpretation" of the constitution of "no further use or effect." The church's Advisory Committee had stated that both the church law and the authoritative interpretation must be repealed in order to open the way for the ordination of openly gay and lesbian Presbyterians.

The Assembly action did just that — if a majority of presbyteries vote to reverse the position they took three years ago. The repeal of the authoritative interpretation will not go into effect unless the amendment to delete G-6.0106b is ratified. (*from **General Assembly News**, a publication of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).*

Unrolling blankets for aboriginal rights

Church groups, aboriginal leaders and other Canadians converged by train on Canada's capital recently to demonstrate for swifter government resolution of aboriginal rights issues.



Stephen Allen participates in the unrolling of the blankets on the lawn of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Several hundred people unfurled 1,000 blankets on the lawn of the Supreme Court of Canada in Ottawa on June 21, National Aboriginal Day. The ceremony called for the restoration of land to aboriginal people and represented a reversal of the "blanket exercise" in which blankets are rolled up to symbolize the dispossession of aboriginal people from their land. Throughout the ceremony, the doors of nearby St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church remained open in hospitality.

Following the unrolling of the blankets, participants marched down Wellington Street, past the Parliament Buildings to the Human Rights Memorial. Presbyterian participants included: Stephen Allen, associate secretary, Justice Ministries; Janet Dunnett of Westminster Church, Ottawa; Rev. Tony Boonstra, minister of St. Andrew's Church, Richmond, Ont.; and Rev. Ian Gray, minister of St. David and St. Martin Church, Ottawa. (*From reports by Ian Gray and ENI*)

Medical Student Elective in Nicaragua

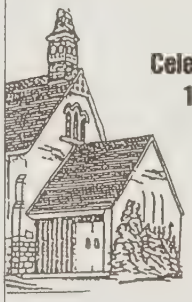
Attention: medical students who are active members of **The Presbyterian Church in Canada**

International Ministries is offering two opportunities for medical students to take an elective in Nicaragua. The emphasis is on primary care in the community, in Managua and on the Atlantic Coast near Bluefields. There may also be hospital placements in emergency, pediatrics and obstetrics.

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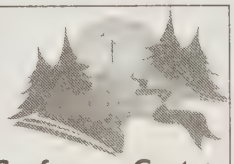
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news scan

Help religions to fight AIDS, governments told

Declaring that faith-based groups are under-utilized in the fight against HIV/AIDS, more than a dozen religious groups have called for strengthened partnerships between faith groups, governments and intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations. The call came in an interfaith statement, drafted by the World Council of Churches and other religious groups, presented on the first day of a three-day United Nations special session on HIV/AIDS held June 25-27 in New York City. (*ENI*)

Repentant pilferers return hotel towels after sermon

Conscience-stricken people have handed in large quantities of stolen goods, including hotel towels, a bathrobe and cash, after attending a church rally supported by more than 100 churches in Liverpool, England, at which a preacher urged them to repent. The inventory of pilfered items included hospital crutches, library books, CDs, videotapes — and about 400 pounds sterling ($560 US). There were also several letters of confession. The items were left in large special containers at an Anglican cathedral in Liverpool after a congregation of 3,000 heard renowned preacher J. John speak on the Eighth Commandment. (*ENI*)

Attending church with dogged determination

Petra the dog goes to church every Sunday morning and walks 26 kilometres to get there. Petra walks alone to a church in Ermesinde, Portugal, to take her usual place next to the altar in time for the 7:30 mass. (*Reuters*)

Check out the *Record*'s children's page on page 50. Then link to more activities online at **www.presbyterian.ca/record**. Click on **Called to wonder**.

Tony Plomp



Laity and the life of the church

question: *What is the meaning of "laity"? Are elders "laypeople"? What is the role of the "laity" in the life of the church?*

My dictionary defines "laity" as "the people as distinguished from the clergy or from a professional class" *(Thorndike Barnhart Comprehensive Desk Dictionary).*

Since I do not have a degree in medicine, I am classified as a "layperson" with regard to the medical profession. Although there may be times when I may want to tell my doctor what to do, I defer to his or her judgment because the doctor is the "professional" and I am not. Similarly, those who do not have degrees in theology and are not part of the ordained clergy do not have "professional status" as clergy. Therefore, "laypeople" are the part of the congregation that is not clergy. This includes elders, even though they are ordained and share with the minister in the governance and the pastoral care of the congregation. In his *Handbook for Canadian Presbyterians*, John S. Moir writes: "Laity, in popular but theologically debatable usage, lay persons collectively as distinguished from the clergy, but originally meaning the whole people of God, both lay and clergy."

The sharp distinction between the roles of laity and clergy has a long history in the church. People simply followed the directions of the clergy. Did the clergy grab for this kind of power? Perhaps. It is also true, however, that, all too frequently, the "laity" were happy enough to let the clergy do the work. "After all, that's why we pay the minister." But I am a firm believer that, although clergy need to give appropriate leadership and fulfil their specific tasks to which God has called them, it must never be at the expense of squelching the initiatives and gifts of the whole people of God.

At one of our General Assemblies, a huge banner hanging over the podium read "Unleashing the Laity." One commissioner, whom I knew to be vitally involved in the leadership of her congregation, became upset. "We're not dogs who need to be unleashed," she said. Point taken. There are many people in our congregations who are already actively engaged in the gospel ministry, taking on responsibilities clergy all too often needlessly place on their own shoulders.

It is hard for ministers "to let go" because the truth is, once you let go, two things may happen. First, nothing may happen. And it is frustrating and painful to observe some programs you wanted begun so badly not instituted and others close down. Secondly, the minister may suddenly find that members of the congregation now do the things he or she used to do. When power is taken out of the ministerial hands, some find this tough to manage.

As the saying goes, I have "been there, done that." In my earlier years of ministry in the congregation I have served for over 30 years, few things happened among us without my direct involvement or prompting. As time went by, however, I realized that a congregation centred on the efforts of one person is a congregation eventually bound to fail. So I began a deliberate and, sometimes, personally painful withdrawal from many tasks I (and others) assumed were mine. But what a blessing this has been to the congregation! Leadership is still provided by the session and the minister, but almost everything else in congregational life, from board of managers to Bible studies, from special events to pastoral care, continues to flourish without the constant presence and prompting of the minister.

Although clergy need to give appropriate leadership and fulfil their specific tasks to which God has called them, it must never be at the expense of squelching the initiatives and gifts of the whole people of God

Of course, there is always more "equipping" to do. Just as ministers need "continuing education," so do the members of the congregation. Watch the gifts of God flourish in the midst of God's people when we pray it to be so and when the leadership takes positive action to allow this to happen. R

Please send questions for Rev. Tony Plomp to tony_plomp@telus.net or 4020 Lancelot Dr., Richmond, B.C. V7C 4S3.



NEW CHOIR GOWNS, purchased with funds raised by choir members at a dinner and through private donations, had their debut at the Christmas Eve service at Woodville Community Church, Woodville, Ont. Rev. John Ufkes (seated) dedicated the gowns.



TWO HAPPY CUSTOMERS carry away their purchase from a Bring and Buy sale held by Deep River Community Church, Deep River, Ont. The sale raised $1,885.70 for the relief of earthquake victims in El Salvador.



A GRAND TIME was had by all at the Robbie Burns dinner held at New St. Andrew's Church, Chatham-Kent, Ont. All tartened-up are (L to R): Larry McIntosh, Sandra Smith, Debby Calquhoun and Rev. Kate Pfeffer-McIntosh.



EVERETT BRIARD was presented with a framed certificate by Janet Ecker, MPP for Ajax-Pickering, on the occasion of his 25th anniversary as a member of the board of Fernie House, Toronto. Before his retirement, Everett was the minister of Grace Church, West Hill, Ont., for many years, and he is currently the interim moderator for St. Andrew's Church, Ajax, Ont.



THE CONGREGATION OF St. Giles Kingsway Church, Toronto, celebrated its 50th anniversary on the exact date: Nov. 12, 2000. Both of the congregation's former ministers — Bill Adamson (1950-91) and Clyde Ervine (1991-2000) — took part in the service, which included a specially commissioned anthem. Founding members, Mary Peckover (left) and Betty Hallamore, were joined by the first minister, Bill Adamson, in cutting the anniversary cake. The previous evening, a dinner and program were held.

Please note: Photos submitted for People & Places must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they are to be returned. Also, please try to ensure all pictures are clear and do not include a multitude of people. Colour or black-and-white photos are acceptable, but negatives and slides cannot be used. Thank you.



THE CHOIR AND CONGREGATION OF St. David and St. Martin Church, Ottawa, officially recognized the contributions Joan David has made throughout the years by making her choir director emeritus. Joan was the organist and choir director at St. David's Church before amalgamation and she continued in that role at St. David and St. Martin for 35 years until retiring in 1991. She was also presented with a plaque, and a 30-voice choir of past and present members dedicated the anthem (her favourite), "All in the April evening," in her honour.



THE WOMEN'S AUXILIARY GROUP 5 of St. Andrew's Church, Cobourg, Ont., recently celebrated Dorothy Cunningham's 25 years as leader of the group. Showing they still stand behind their leader are (L to R): Barbara Bowen, Helen Van Dusen, Ruthanna Thompson, Eleanor Turpin and Arlene McEwan. (Missing are Noreen Rylott and Nancy McGrimmon.)



THE CHOIR AND CONGREGATION OF St. Andrew's Memorial Church, Port Credit, Ont., recently honoured Lulu Burton for her 70 years of musical service. Pictured with Lulu are: M. Marland, MPP, who presented her with a plaque from the Ontario government; choir president Nancy Austin; and director of music Eileen Best.



THE CONGREGATION OF Dorchester Church, Dorchester, Ont., held a brunch after a recent worship service to celebrate a record nine people joining the church. From left to right are: Joanne Marshall, Suzanne Greaves, Randy Ladouceur, Donna Ladoucer, Rev. Ed Musson, Bev Dale, Wally Lisowyk, Linda Febrey and Sharon Benson. (Absent from photo: Jim Febrey.)



THE CONGREGATION OF Kildonan Church, Winnipeg, began its 150th anniversary celebrations on Jan. 28. Pictured, guest minister Rev. Dennis Carrothers (left) visits with retired minister Rev. Dick Gillanders.



THE CONGREGATION OF St. Matthew's Church, Grand Falls-Windsor, Nfld., paid tribute to Viola Arklie upon her retirement as church organist after 62 years of service. A luncheon was held in Viola's honour at which several presentations were made, including a token of appreciation from the congregation, represented by clerk of session George Scott.

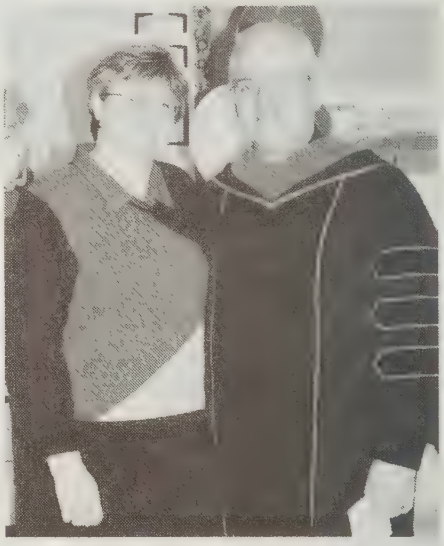
THE YOUTH GROUP OF West Vancouver Church, West Vancouver, are pictured in the first few hours of their 24-hour fast, undertaken to raise money for the children of the Francisco Coll School in Guatemala City. Through pledges, they collected $1,500. They also collected 3,000 chewable vitamins for children, an expensive and hard-to-get necessity in Guatemala. From left to right are: Elizabeth, Kaitlin, Cathy (sponsor teacher), Alexandra, Megan, Rebecca and, in front, Tiana and Terri.



THE YOUTH OF First Church and St. James Church, Chatham, Ont., met for a day of fund-raising featuring a chili lunch and a game of hockey on in-line skates. Together, they raised $71 for the PWS&D mosquito nets project for Malawi.



KNOX CHURCH, Dundas, Ont., honoured Rev. Don Donaghey and his wife, Bonnie, on the 10th anniversary of their ministry with the congregation, on Jan, 28.





THE SUNDAY SCHOOL OF First Church, Collingwood, Ont., participated in a four-week rotation on "Partners Around the World" during March. The children visited a site called "the dump" — a reminder of the real dump in Guatemala City— and watched videos taken by members of the congregation who helped to build a school in Guatemala. The children also raised $228 — enough to pay for six kits for India.



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN OF St. Andrew's Church, Beechwood, Ont., participated in a mission project in February that combined Black History Month with the PWS&D Malawi project. Through the weekly offering, collecting money at home and funds raised by holding a "poor boy" luncheon, the children collected $352.49 toward mosquito netting for children in Malawi.

TWO EMILYS WERE HONOURED when the congregation of St. Andrew's Church, Fredericton, celebrated the 99th birthday of life member and regular attendee Emily Travers, and the baptism of Emily Babcock. They are pictured with Rev. Doug Blaikie and Lindsay Babcock, Emily's mother.



George Grant and the Theology of the Cross: The Christian Foundations of His Thought *by Harris Athanasiadis (University of Toronto, 2001, $60). Reviewed by John Vissers.*

It is not every day a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada has a book published by a major university press. Harris Athanasiadis, the minister of St. Mark's Church in Don Mills, Ontario, belongs to a new generation of younger Canadian Presbyterian scholars, and this book marks his first major contribution.

The book was originally undertaken as research at McGill University, Montreal, under the direction of theologian Douglas John Hall, whose own work on the theology of the cross has been recognized as a major contribution to contemporary Christian thought. Athanasiadis takes up Hall's work and applies it to the Canadian philosopher George Grant, one of Canada's best-known cultural commentators of the 20th century (*Philosophy in the Mass Age, Lament for a Nation, Technology and Justice*).

By most accounts, George Grant was something of an enigma. The scion of a quintessential Canadian establishment family (George Munro Grant and George Parkin were his grandfathers; Vincent Massey was his uncle), he nevertheless felt like an outsider all his life. Arguably one of Canada's most significant public intellectuals of the past century, he was often dismissed by the university community as an academic lightweight who was out of step with current thought. A Christian who took his faith seriously, he often found himself at odds with the Canadian churches. Why? Was Grant simply an old curmudgeon who couldn't get along with people?

Not according to Athanasiadis. The author argues persuasively that it had everything to do with the Christian foundations of Grant's thought. Through the influence of Simone Weil and others, Grant embraced Luther's theology of the cross and came to see things through the lens of suffering and deprivation. The ways of God in the world look very different when viewed through the cross. A theology of glory, according to Luther, gets things backwards, calling evil good and good evil. A theology of the cross, however, calls things what they actually are, despite appearances to the contrary. Grant applied these upside-down values of God's reign to modern technological society. As a result, he tried to call things as they were, and not much escaped his judgment: education, the arts, business, politics, the media and the church. Athanasiadis makes his case as he sets out the main themes of Grant's key texts within the framework of Luther's theology of the cross.

This book is clearly written but it is not an easy read. It will, however, repay those who take the time to work through its five well-organized chapters. It will be of interest to scholars, ministers and educated laypeople who wish to pursue the Christian thought of an important Canadian thinker.

Let me be clear: my regard for the author's achievement is high. But two qualifying comments should be noted. First, Athanasiadis takes what is, by his own admission, "a thin tradition" in Grant's thought and uses it to illumine the whole in magisterial fashion. I think he is successful in this. Nevertheless, one gets the sense that this overshadows other important features of Grant's theological thought.

Secondly, Grant often painted with a broad intellectual brush. He was fond of describing two main approaches to Christianity (the Platonic, Augustinian, Lutheran theology versus the Aristotelian, natural theological, Calvinist, Puritan tradition), failing to appreciate the texture and nuance of rich and diverse theological traditions. Athanasiadis recognizes this, but he might have taken on Grant more critically at points, especially when the author's own Calvinist tradition is knocked around. That being said, this is a splendid book and well worth the read!

John Vissers is principal of The Presbyterian College in Montreal.

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A World Religions Resource Guide
(Tony Muhitch Pub., 11 Walmer Rd., #205, Toronto, Ont. M5R 2W9; 416-944-2726; silverbooks@idirect.com; $18 incl. taxes and postage). Reviewed by John A. Johnston.

For congregations considering a study of world religions, this newly published Canadian volume is now available. As its title denotes, this book is a compendium of well-researched information about various faith groups and contains biographies of founders and leaders who have influenced religious thought and practice. Individuals such as Maimonides and Hillel of the Jewish faith or George Fox of the Quakers offer fascinating reading. Lesser known but probably even more interesting are personalities such as the Hindu mystic Sri Ramakrishna or the Sufti ascetic Rabi'ah Al-'Adawiyah.

The reader will also find valuable addresses, Web sites etc. of Canadian multifaith libraries and denominational depositories. For group leaders, sample lesson outlines, assignments and discussion topics will prove helpful. A multicoloured poster on *The Golden Rule* is suggested as the focal point of an introduction to any world religions study.

John A. Johnston, who lives in Hamilton, Ont., is a retired minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Book briefs

Meditations for Weary Parents *by Sandra Drescher-Lehman (Good Books, $11.95, 2000).* Two hundred short, daily meditations for parents who love their children but sometimes become weary.

Family Documents: What they are Where they are *by Walter and Esther Dueck (Waterside, 1997, $24.95 hb, $9.95 pb).* This book allows your family to know the important things about you, your finances and your wishes when you die.

Most books reviewed may be purchased through The Book Room, 50 Wynford Dr., North York, Ont. M3C 1J7. Prices include shipping and handling but not GST. Do not send payment with order. An invoice will follow. Please include name and location of congregation. Toll-free order line: 1-800-619-7301, ext. 301, e-mail: bookroom@presbyterian.ca.

DEATHS

BOYD, MARGARET HELEN, 83, deaconess, peacefully at Hunt Club Manor, Ottawa, on April 14, 2001.

Born in Vancouver and raised in Victoria where she was an active member of Gorge Presbyterian Church, Margaret began her working career as a nurse. An accident that left her unable to nurse and a life-changing experience at the WMS 25th anniversary celebration in Toronto convinced Margaret of her call to diaconal ministry, and she soon returned to Toronto for her training.

She graduated in 1948, serving first in the Okanagan Valley, then extension work in several places in Alberta. In Prince Albert, she learned to drive in the presbytery mission van. Margaret undertook kindergarten work at Tyndale House in Montreal and then at the Vancouver Children's Centre. She also served as the regional secretary for the Hamilton/London Synodical of the WMS, followed by another six years in Saskatchewan.

Margaret finally settled in Ottawa. She became a valued member of St. Timothy's Church in 1966, was ordained an elder in 1971 and served as clerk of session from 1987-1996. Margaret was always a strong supporter of WMS, CGIT, Christian camping and ecumenical Christian education efforts.

The Rev. John Wilson, moderator of the Presbytery of Ottawa, conducted worship at her presbytery funeral. Her longtime friend and minister, The Rev. Garry Morton, reminded mourners of Margaret's considerable gifts and her ongoing willingness to use them in God's service.

BOYNE, REV. JOHN C., BA, BD, died from this life on May 16, 2001, in his 66th year.

John (Jack) C. Boyne was born in Listowel, Ontario, August 10, 1935. He and his family spent much of his youth in Granby, Quebec, before returning to their roots in Listowel. Jack Boyne was ordained on April 30, 1959, at Knox Presbyterian Church, Listowel, having graduated from University of Western Ontario, London, and Knox College, Toronto. Later, during his time in Victoria, he would spend six months studying at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland.

On September 10, 1960, John Boyne and Jean Ferguson of Hamilton were married at St. Enoch's Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, Ont. Their sons, Richard and Peter, together with their wives and the five grandchildren have always been central in Jack and Jean's life.

Jack Boyne served The Presbyterian Church in Canada at Gorge Presbyterian Church (now Trinity Presbyterian), Victoria, B.C.; in Exeter, Cromarty and Hensall, Ont., when they constituted a pastoral charge together; at Alexandra Presbyterian Church, Brantford, Ont.; and, until his early retirement due to health, at Gale Presbyterian Church, Elmira, Ont., where he served from April 1976 until December 1993. During this time, he served as padre to the Elmira Legion. Prior to his call to Elmira, he served three years in personnel at Spinrite Yarns, Listowel.

Despite a disinclination for meetings, Jack Boyne served for a number of years on the board of Camp Kintail, a logical activity since his family cottage, a cherished retreat, was a mile south of the camp.

Jack and Jean retired to the family home in Listowel, the cottage on Lake Huron and, for a few years, a place in Florida. He died in the emergency department at Listowel Hospital on May 16, 2001, after a prolonged time of declining health.

A memorial service was held in Gale Presbyterian Church, Elmira, on May 19, 2001, with The Rev. John Zondag and The Rev. Dr. Linda J. Bell conducting the service, and The Rev. Walter McLean, a classmate and friend, delivering the eulogy. Other members of presbytery were in attendance, as were many family members, friends and former parishioners. The tributes paid to Jack Boyne, publicly during the service and privately to the family afterwards, were fitting and appropriate for this man of steadfast faithfulness, forthright honesty, great compassion and passionate convictions.

HEUSTIN, REV. W. HAROLD, born April 3, 1912, was called Home on June 1, 2001. Lovingly remembered by his wife, Leona, and his children, Ian, David and Jean (Hicks), and their families.

KREPPS, REV. REX G., was born in Brock, Saskatchewan, March 16, 1921, and passed away March 11, 2001, in his 80th year. He is lovingly remembered by his wife, Trudy; son Lee; and grandsons Jonathan, Joshua and Jerrad. Rex was predeceased by his son Brent in 1995. Finishing high school in Saskatoon, Rex joined the Armed Forces upon graduation, serving the #8 Canadian General Hospital from 1940-46. After the war, Rex worked as a municipal secretary and then entered Knox College, Toronto, to study for the ministry. Graduating in 1956, Rex served in Virden, Man.; Winnipeg; Salmon Arm, B.C.; and, finally, Maple Ridge, B.C. Rex married Trudy Magnus in 1957; sons Lee and Brent were born in Virden. Rex and Trudy retired to Oliver, B.C., in 1987, where Rex was active in the Canadian Legion and continued to minister in the area. Rex had a pastor's heart, touching countless people throughout his ministry. He will never be forgotten.

SMITH, REV. JACQUES, died in Prince Edward Island on May 20, 2001, at the age of 93. Although an Anglican clergyman at his death, he had been a zealous worker for The Presbyterian Church in Canada, almost singlehandedly reviving our French work after 1925. Under his leadership began Église St-Luc, Montreal; Église St-Paul, Melbourne; Camp d'action biblique, Richmond; as well as francophone mission works in St-René-de-Beauce and Sorel, Quebec. He was very active in publication work, making Reformed literature available in French translation, with the generous financial support of the Women's Missionary Society. He was loved by all with whom he worked at the congregational level, and was wonderfully supported by his wife, Hélène, who survives him, as does his son, André, of P.E.I.

THOMSON, REV. DR. JAMES KENNEDY "ROSS," peacefully passed to his rest at St. Catharines General Hospital, Ontario, May 24, 2001, in his 90th year.

Ross Thomson was born in Wales in 1911 and came to Canada in 1919, to Wainwright, Alberta, where his father took a position as minister. Ross ministered in Erskine Presbyterian, Hamilton, Ontario, and MacVicar Memorial, Montreal, before accepting the call to Knox Church, St. Catharines, where he served from January 1954 until 1977 when he semi-retired to Knox Church, Monkton, Ontario. After five years, he returned to St. Catharines and served as interim minister at West St. Andrew's Church. Throughout his ministry, Ross Thomson served with distinction on

The Transitions column welcomes announcements of special events such as births, marriages, anniversaries, graduations, baptisms and the reception of new members, as well as death notices. The rate is $1 per word or $50 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.
All notices of pulpit vacancies, recognitions, ordinations and inductions will be charged to the congregation: $10 for the basic notice and $1 per word for additional information. (There will be no charge to congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.)
Contact the *Record* office regarding all items for the Transitions column.

many boards and committees of the General Assembly. He was elected as moderator of both the Presbytery of Niagara and the Synod of Hamilton-London. In his years in St. Catharines, he was appointed to the boards of the Hôtel Dieu hospital and the Children's Aid Society.

Ross is predeceased by his loving wife and best friend, Frances Helen (1994); his daughter Helen (1972); brother David, and sisters Megan and Esther. Dr. Thomson is survived by his sister Grace Duncombe; his sons Ian and his wife, Monica, Gordon and his wife, Shirley; daughter Fran and her husband, Bill Immel. He is dearly and forever missed by grandchildren: Jim, Bruce, Linda, Justin, Samantha, Lori, Carl, Sean, Charles and Lisa; five great-grandchildren; and his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Curry.

Ross had a great devotion to the gospel. After he entered the Loyalist Retirement Home, he immediately began services on Sundays for all the residents who cared to attend — and they did. He was always a thoughtful preacher who commanded respect from his hearers. In this way, he made a significant impact on many who had no other access to worship. A time came when this was too much for his strength, so he took to writing inspiring messages for the in-house publication; these were greatly appreciated by both the staff and residents.

Truly he was "faithful unto death." Those who knew him will ever give thanks to God for his life and ministry over so many years.

ANDERSON, SAM, 90, longtime member, elder, Knox, Listowel, Ont., passed away Jan. 30, 2001.

BABION, ROSS, 85, elder and historian, First Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, Ont., died May 22, 2001.

BISHOP, LILLIAN "LIL" (NOBLE), a faithful member and choir participant of Knox Presbyterian Church, Sudbury, Ont., died on May 26, 2001.

CLELAND, LILLIAN K., 102, longtime member, WMS life member, one of first female elders elected at Knox, Listowel, Ont., passed away April 14, 2001.

DAVIDSON, ROBERT, died May 21, 2001. Longtime member, Wexford, Scarborough, Ont. Elder since 1966. Served in many capacities including teacher, clerk of session, convener of property and finance committee. Also served on board of Ewart College and senate of Knox College.

FOLEY, FRANCIS JAMES, on May 28, in his 81st year. Longtime member of Knox Presbyterian Church, Welland, Ont., where he served for over 40 years on the board; was a trustee and an elder. Francis's zest for life was always evident in his loud, infectious laugh. He served his country (Glengarry Highlanders) and his Master faithfully and well. Sorely missed.

HARVEY, MARJORIE McLEAN (CRAIG), born January 18, 1924, in Hespeler, Ontario. She was baptized at St. Andrew's Hespeler Presbyterian Church and became an active supportive member of the congregation. She was involved with the Presbyterian Women and was the first woman elder elected to the session and became clerk of session in 1991. Her life was dedicated to serving the Lord and living a Christian life. Marge is survived by her husband, Percy; daughter, Barbara; and son, Dr. Robert, his wife, Donna, and two grandchildren, Craig and Nicole. A memorial service was held in St. Andrew's Hespeler Presbyterian Church conducted by Rev. Wallace Little and Rev. Wilfred McLeod.

HENDERSON, A. McKIE, 77, faithful member, served Knox, Listowel, Ont., as Sunday school superintendent, elder, board member and custodian, passed away March 6, 2001.

HILL, JAMES "WARREN," longtime member of St. Peter's Presbyterian Church, Madoc, Ont., and elder for 40 years, passed away June 11, 2001, at the Belleville General Hospital. The funeral service was conducted by The Rev. Stephen Thompson of St. Peter's Presbyterian Church, Madoc, Ont. The eulogy was given by The Rev. Dr. Vernon Tozer of Brantford, Ont. Left to mourn are Warren's wife, Vera; his daughter, Janet Gaebel; and grandchildren Wendy and Christopher Gaebel.

HUNTLEY, MERV, elder, good friend and coworker at St. Stephen's in Ottawa, died suddenly, June 9, 2001.

KIRKER, JEAN, 85, of Olds, Alta., passed away on March 8, 2001. An elder for 21 years and an accomplished violinist. Previously active in Presbyterian churches in Carstairs, Innisfail, Calgary and Vancouver. Jean lived an exemplary Christian life and frequently said and practised, "What God gives you, he means you to share."

MacDONALD, GEORGE ALLISON "ADDIE," suddenly entered into eternal rest at the Halifax Infirmary, Halifax, Nova Scotia, on Friday, February 11, 2000. Addie, as he was widely known, was a lifetime member of Zion Presbyterian Church, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, as were his forefathers. Addie became a member of session in 1985 and he diligently applied his many talents in looking after the welfare of the members of the congregation. He also served on the board of trustees.

Addie's community service began with the Charlottetown city council where he served as alderman from 1960 to 1969. He entered provincial politics by being elected to the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island in 1970 and was re-elected in 1974.

His funeral was held from Zion Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, February 15, 2000, with Lieutenant-Governor Gilbert Clements and Mrs. Clements; Mr. George MacDonald, Mayor of the City of Charlottetown, in attendance; as well as many of the citizens of the city and province. Rev. Blaine Dunnett and Rev. Dr. Gordon Matheson officiated.

Left to mourn the passing of a husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather are his wife, Olave (Partridge), daughters Marilyn (Jack) Kane, Judith (Bill) Lougheed, Susan Martin (Alan Dubeck), Dr. Linda MacDonald (Kent Brown), Kim (Dan) Tupper and one son, Dr. Peter (Bonnie) MacDonald; 19 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren; brother Elmer MacDonald.

MACPHERSON, COL. BRUCE D., CD, ADC, on July 14, 2001, after a lengthy illness. He was the son of the late Rev. Dr. and Mrs. A. Gordon Macpherson of Toronto and an elder at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Windsor, Ont. He served as an executive with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for 33 years, was a former commanding officer with the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders (Winnipeg), and a former commander of the Windsor Militia District. Sadly missed by his wife, Anne, and his five children.

MATHESON, DR. ALASTAIR "AL," died in Victoria on May 18, 2001. He was born in Vancouver in 1929. He was respected internationally as a biochemist, his work being done at the National Research Council in Ottawa and the University of Victoria, where he was dean of science for a number of years. In 1984, he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. For the past 20 years, he has served as an elder in St. Andrew's, Victoria, and while in Ottawa was an elder in another St. Andrew's. He was loved and respected by everyone who knew him and he will be greatly missed. He leaves to mourn his loving wife of 41 years, Lawrie; his beloved daughters and their husbands, Sally and Frank Balazs, Ellen and Charles Kierulf; and his adored grandchildren, Nicholas and Emma Balazs, and Alastair and Gavin Kierulf.

MILLER, HARRY, elder and founding member of St. Stephen's in Ottawa, died May 11, 2001.

NORMAN, REGINALD "REG," faithful member 50 years, elder 44 years, choir member 49 years, former clerk of session, representative elder, roll clerk, superintendent of Sunday school, Alexandra Church, Brantford, Ont., June 29, 2001.

POLLOCK, JIM, elder and longtime co-worker at St. Stephen's, Ottawa, died April 7, 2001.

REDDITT, JOHN, faithful and active member, an elder since 1947, Mt. Pleasant Church, Ont., died July 17, 2001.

SINGLETON, LESTER A., 90, of Belle River and Charlottetown, P.E.I., entered into eternal rest at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Charlottetown on May 13, 2001. Lester served 25 years as an elder at Zion Presbyterian Church, Charlottetown, having been ordained in 1976. He was a quiet and gentle man who was a friend to everyone and was ready to go the extra mile to be of service to all who called on him. Lester leaves to mourn his passing his beloved wife, Sarah (Sally), two sons and two daughters, along

with six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, all of whom lovingly remember him. His largely attended funeral was held at Charlottetown on May 15, 2001. The service was conducted by Rev. Blaine Dunnett of Zion Presbyterian Church. Interment at Wood Islands, Prince Edward Island.

STEENSON, DONALD BLAIR, died June 29, 2001, at the age of 83. Don was an elder of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. He was the retired registrar of the Ontario Board of Funeral Services and retired dean of the Canadian School of Embalming. Don served in the RCAF during the Second World War with the Toronto Scottish Regiment pipe band. Memorial service was held at St. Andrew's Hespeler Presbyterian Church on July 3, 2001. He leaves to mourn his passing his beloved wife, Gladys.

WATTS, VICTOR H., 79, of Kirkwood Drive, at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Charlottetown, P.E.I., on Thursday, June 21, 2001. Victor served as an elder of Zion Presbyterian Church for a period of 25 years having joined session in 1976. He also served on the board of trustees. Vic, as he was known, was active in the life of Zion Church prior to holding an office. He and his wife, Ruby, spent many hours visiting among the members of the church, especially the seniors and others who were set aside by illness or infirmity. Vic was a valued member of session and was always ready to express his views on any subject in his quiet and studious manner. In 1939, Vic joined the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve and served in many places throughout the Second Word War. Following the war, he remained in the Navy for an additional five years, retiring with the rank of petty officer. In his peacetime employment, he was a bricklayer by trade and spent some time as an instructor at the P.E.I. Vocational School.

Victor leaves to mourn his passing his beloved wife, Ruby (Downe), having celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on May 24, 2001, just prior to Vic entering the hospital. He was the dear father of Alan (Jean), David, Ray (Rhonda), Bonnie (Peter). He was predeceased by son Donnie. Twelve loving grandchildren will also miss him. Also surviving him is a sister, Jean, of Newfoundland and a brother, Ralph, of British Columbia.

On the evening prior to the funeral, the Royal Canadian Legion held a veterans tribute service. His funeral was held on Sunday, June 24, 2001, at 2 p.m. from Zion Presbyterian Church, the service being conducted by Rev. Blaine Dunnett. Interment in the Peoples Cemetery, Charlottetown.

WHITE, JERRY, faithful member 16 years, elder 12 years, Alexandra Church, Brantford, Ont., June 28, 2001.

WISEMAN, BRUCE, 81, faithful elder and worker of St. Andrew's, Burks Falls, Ont. Passed away after a short illness on Feb. 26, 2001.

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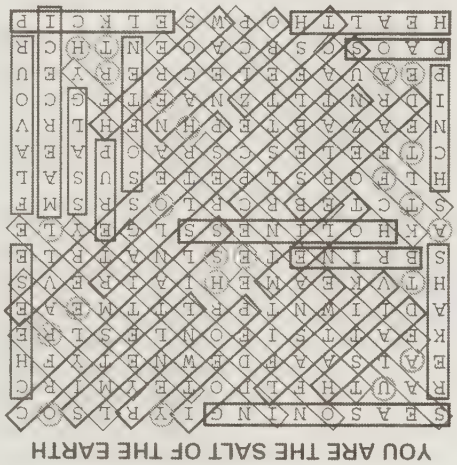
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Bruce will be greatly missed by his wife and family and his church family.

INDUCTIONS and RECOGNITIONS

Sharpe, Rev. Brian and Rev. Alison, Renfrew Church, Renfrew, Ont., Oct. 15, 2000.

Templer, Rev. Mary, University Community Church, Windsor, Ont., by the Presbytery of Essex-Kent, commencing Aug. 15, 2001.

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the ways in which the hands learn how to pray,
the deeds that teach the knees what they must know
about celebrating their own mysteries.

Even the places we choose to burn candles
effect these things. The business of liturgy
is to choreograph the details
of the divine dance, to name for the eyes

what the spirit already knows, to tell
the story with more than words, with gesture
and tone, colour and texture, light and things
not light at all. These doings can christen

something as simple as fabric and wood,
baptize time and space with names so new
angels gather to sing them. This is the stuff
that remembers what we were before the fall.

It recalls the nub and marrow of our
journey, the root and substance of our call,
the sweet essence of our affair with God,
the core and kernel of what we hope to be.

— Fredrick Zydek

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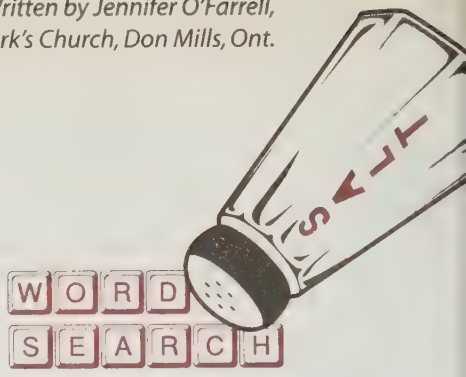
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called to wonder

Matthew 5:13

Written by Jennifer O'Farrell,
St. Mark's Church, Don Mills, Ont.



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FLAVOUR

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HOLINESS
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LIFE
MELT
OCEAN
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PICKLE
PINCH
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SALTBLOCK
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SALTY

SEASONING
SHAKER
SMELL
SOAP
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K	E	A	T	T	S	I	E	O	N	L	E	S	L	R	E
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S	B	R	I	N	E	T	E	S	L	N	A	T	R	L	E
A	K	H	O	L	I	N	E	S	S	L	G	E	Y	L	E
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N	E	A	Z	A	B	T	E	P	H	N	F	H	L	R	V
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H	E	A	L	T	H	O	P	W	S	E	L	K	C	I	P

See page 47 for the Word Search solution.

Have fun searching for these salty words!

Talk to someone about the meaning of the words above. Think about how each word is connected with salt.

Did you know salt is an important part of playdough?

Easy playdough recipe

In bowl mix together:
- 4 cups flour
- 1/4 cup salt
- 1/4 cup powdered tempera paint

(this can also be made with liquid paint OR with no paint at all)

In another bowl mix together:
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1 Tablespoon oil

Gradually add the liquid mixture to the dry mixture.

When mixed, knead the dough.
If too sticky, add more flour.
If too stiff, add more water.



PRAYER

Thank you, God, for the world and for my life. You have made your children to be sacred seasoning. I pray that I may bring love and hope to the people of your earth today. Amen.

Link to learning activities about **SALT** online at:
www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html.
At the Web site, you can find out about the WORDS on the list and print out extra copies of the WORD SEARCH.

Ivan S. Gamble

Blackberry juice

An unexpected theological lesson



Our grandson Daneel Borba was named after a delightful humanoid robot in some of Isaac Azimov's novels. My daughter Brenda and her husband, Joe, are science fiction fans. But, in one respect, Daneel is decidedly unrobotic: he has willpower. In fact, he might be called "wilful" or "full of will."

There were many blackberry bushes near their Surrey home. Earlier in the year, I had pruned back a lot of the bushes to make later picking easier. To blackberry pickers, the shoots seem alive with crafty intent, always ready to spring out and attack intruders. So blackberry picking is done not with "kid gloves" but with at least one leather one.

There was blackberry juice on his pants, shirt, face and, especially, his hands. "Daneel," I asked, "why did you do it? Why did you smear the blackberry juice on the door of the shed?"

Whether or not humans have free will has been a matter of dispute with theologians and philosophers for centuries. Yet, most agree "will" is what makes us human. We have the ability to make decisions. Since it is our will that makes us human, one would think that "wilful" would be a specially positive term. Yet, "wilful" usually describes one whose "no" decisions predominate and whose "no" is usually a reaction to other human beings (like parents) who were looking for a "yes." So Daneel was a challenge to his parents and also to his older brother, Brendan.

There is a mystery about human bonding. Some sort of "super glue" stuck Daneel and me together. His countenance would light up when we came to visit, but his face was frown-furrowed when we left. It was a pleasure to see him grow. I enjoyed reading, playing and going for walks with him.

Gwen and I visited the Borbas at the end of August during blackberry season.

One day, I heard Brendan exclaim, "Mom, look what Daneel is doing!"

Brenda looked out of the window and saw five-year-old Daneel smearing blackberry juice on the door of a shed behind the house. She went to the balcony and called, "Daneel, come into the house right now!"

When Daneel came in, he seemed more stubborn than sorry. There was blackberry juice on his pants, shirt, face and, especially, his hands. His mother told him to go out and wash the stains off the shed door. I offered to give him a hand.

The shed in the backyard had been a storage place for coal and was now mostly empty. A few weeks before, someone had broken into the shed after prying boards off a window. Daneel was with me when I nailed some new boards over the window opening.

To clean off the door, Daneel and I took some rags and a couple of ice-cream buckets filled with water from an outside tap. As we worked, Daneel said, "I got four handfuls of berries." I knew four handfuls took a lot of effort as well as courage considering the risky nature of blackberry picking and that most of the berries were on the other side of a thick hedge, requiring a walk of up to 100 yards.

"Daneel," I asked, "why did you do it? Why did you smear the blackberry juice on the door of the shed?"

"To scare away the bad guys!" he replied.

His answer put the whole incident in a different light. My thinking made a paradigm shift. Protection was his motive, not mischief. His answer gave me new light on the Passover blood sprinkled on the doorposts of the homes of the Jewish slaves in Egypt just before the Exodus. It was a protective sprinkling, sparing them from the awesome power of the angel of death.

Daneel also provided fresh insight into the blood of Christ. When the Holy Spirit smears the blood of Christ over my heart, it washes away the bad things — my sin and guilt. And it continues to "scare away the bad guys" — the inward bad guys of fear, worry, doubt and anxiety — the devil's sinister alien agents of evil.

Thank you, Daneel, for a positive and meaningful object lesson! R

Ivan Gamble is a retired minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada who lives in Kelowna, B.C.

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PRESBYTERIAN
Record

October 2001



Why?

Struggling with the questions of suicide

pages 14 and 41

Let us be clear on this point — the Bible recognizes only one specifically "Christian" vocation, namely God's calling us out of sin and death into the new righteousness and eternal life of his people. Now the New Testament word for "people" is "laity" (*laos*). Therefore, every member of God's "people" is called into this vocation, to be a "full-time worker" for Jesus Christ.

— Joseph McLelland in *The Other Six Days*

Jesus never intended to narrow ministry to priests; nor did he ever intend to do what we have done, namely, to narrow priests down to highly educated, middle- and upper-class, white male celibates.

— Frank Bonnike

There is a wild, splendid, intoxicating joy that follows work well done.

— Elbert Hubbard

There are three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, mind and purse. Of the three it may well be that we moderns find the conversion of the purse the most difficult.

— Martin Luther

The world of children

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees cares for 22.3 million people. An estimated 10 million are children under the age of 18.

— *Refugees* magazine

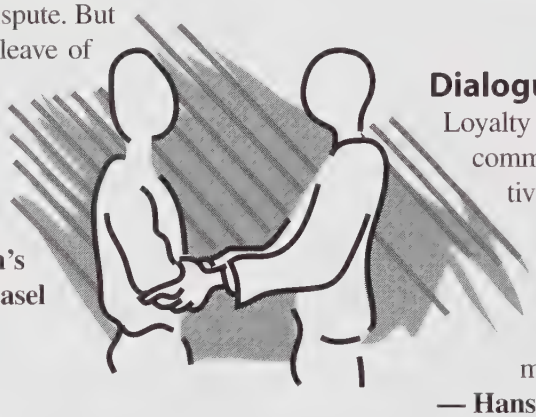
An ethic gone wrong is an essential preliminary to the sweat-shop or the concentration camp and the death march.

— Simon Blackburn in *Being Good*

One church

It has been integral to the Christian church from the beginning that there are within it varying views about the understanding of the biblical message and about the right way to live, that may and will often lead to discussion and even dispute. But the differing sides are not allowed to take leave of each other, knowing that they all belong to the Church of Christ. Even when it is an effort for them to acknowledge each other mutually as its members, they should make that effort for the sake of Christ's love.

— Eberhard Busch, Karl Barth's last assistant at the University of Basel



Dialogue

Loyalty to one's own tradition and faith community does not exclude a sensitivity towards those of other faiths that is orientated in dialogue.... The final goal of all our efforts cannot be a unitary religion; it must be an authentic peace-making between religions.

— Hans Küng in *Global Responsibility*

The unity of the church

If the church is in the end to be united under the leadership of Christ (Ephesians 1:10), it will not in the meantime be united in any other way. Is the continuing fragmentation of the church due ultimately to this one thing, its failure to "hold fast to the Head" (Colossians 2:19)? No doubt many would dismiss this as a ludicrous over-simplification. But I am not so easily shifted from my ground. The stubborn obstacle to the uniting of the churches is either the cherishing of traditions which are not in the Bible (the characteristic of the Roman Catholic Church), or the abandoning of doctrines which are (the characteristic of liberal Protestantism). I keep returning to this simple question: is Jesus Christ the Lord of the church, so that it submits to his teaching however unpalatable, or is the church the lord of Jesus Christ so that it manipulates his teaching in order to make it palatable? Will the church listen humbly and obediently to Jesus Christ, or will it behave like the brash adolescent it often seems to be, contradicting its master and putting him right where he has gone wrong? Is the church "over" or "under" Christ?

— John Stott

Thanksgiving is good but thanks-living is better.

— Matthew Henry

John Congram



September 11

We thought we had seen it all. Then September 11 arrived with the terrorist attack on the United States. Who can ever forget the images? Planes slamming into the World Trade Center in New York City followed, a short while later, by both towers collapsing in a pile of smoking rubble. Desperate folk, clinging to the sides of the buildings, choosing to jump to their deaths rather than be incinerated. And the irony: it happened on the day the United Nations designated as the International Day of Peace.

Immediate reactions came from all quarters. Moderator Joe Reed, travelling in India, issued a statement from Bombay expressing shock and horror as well as offering condolences and sympathy on behalf of our church. Rick Fee of Presbyterian World Service and Development pledged to assist our partners in the United States and around the world in their trauma and with relief aid. Jen Baillie, president of the Presbyterian Young People's Society of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, called for prayer for the lives of the bereaved and injured as well as for the perpetrators. She recalled the recent Youth Triennium and friends made there who live near the disaster scene. The Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees of the Middle East Council of Churches issued an important statement expressing shock and sadness, condemning these acts of violence and terrorism, and stressing that "violence and terrorism cannot and will not resolve outstanding political issues."

Despite the reassuring words of political leaders, we all felt a little less secure after September 11. The day following, a friend travelling from Toronto to Montreal called from Belleville to say that, when she saw a military plane overhead, a feeling of overpowering fear seized her. Our sighs of relief at the end of the Cold War seem short-lived as we now come face to face with an enemy we had heard and read about but now have met. We learned this new enemy does not kill innocent people only in places like Serbia and the Sudan but can reach us as well. This set these events apart from all the others we had seen and read about — they were so close to home. Perhaps we have visited the buildings, flown from the airports, known folk who have been there or worked there — some, by chance, even killed or wounded by these acts.

We understand the confusion, pain, cries of anger and the desire to track down and wreak revenge on those who perpetrated such madness. Here at church offices, we held a service of prayer at noon. I was asked to read Scripture. Words were inadequate to express our feelings. Silence seemed the only appropriate response. I read a psalm that cries out for national deliverance and security.

In the turmoil of our feelings, we must try not to lose sight of other realities. In many parts of our world, people regularly encounter events similar to those perpetrated against the United States. And they encounter them with little or no hope of redress. This impotence and hopelessness nurtures terrorism.

I write this the day after these horrific events. By the time you read these words, much will have been written and spoken, new facts will no doubt have been uncovered. Whatever individual or group is found responsible for this terrorism, we must not allow our rage to spill over onto all the people represented by that person or group. If it is an Arab, we must not condemn all Arabs. If it is a Muslim, we should not express our anger at all Muslims, many of whom are more peace loving than we are. Sadly, random acts of verbal abuse and violence against Muslims have already been reported.

When you pray for the victims of this attack on the United States, remember also innocent people in many parts of the world who are daily victimized by poverty and violence. Pray that this attack will not deter efforts to right wrongs or render impotent the just causes of victimized people. Revenge, while understandable, will not heal the victims of violence or ensure its end.

The words of those who have not lost loved ones in such a disaster sound superficial and simplistic. None the less, an even greater disaster might be to allow such events to harden our hearts or lessen our resolve to work for a world that more closely resembles God's Kingdom of justice and love. The realization of that dream remains the only real security against terrorism.

John Congram

We can make a difference



Photos: Karen Plater

You cannot feed a family with this maize. A normal cob of maize would fill this hand. Yet, it is more than most farmers have been able to harvest from their fields. A merciless and stubborn drought has left 1.5 million of the poorest farmers in Central America with no crops to sell, and no money to buy food. PWS&D has issued an emergency appeal and sent more than $30,000 to help PWS&D partners buy food for the poorest of the poor. More help is needed.

You can help. Please support PWS&D.

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A report on the state of the ministry of the laity in The Presbyterian Church in Canada • Padre Jock Anderson recalls missing those he laid to rest • What subscribers told us in the *Record*'s recent survey

About the "Antichrist"

The description of the pope as "Antichrist" certainly sounds politically incorrect in this ecumenical era. Some find it downright embarrassing. We should, however, recall the historical context out of which that identification came: the many bishops executed in the reign of Mary Tudor, the slaughter of Waldensian refugees in the Alps, the brutally aggressive wars of Julius II, the flagrant immorality and nepotism of Alexander VI, and the absolutist claim of Boniface VIII. The followers of St. Francis, and Dante, like more than a few cardinals desirous of a collegial system and church renewal, also called some popes by the title whose appropriateness is now appropriately questioned.

Mariano Di Gangi, Ottawa

Signs from God

I was disappointed with Tony Plomp's answer ("Seeking God's confirmation," July/August *Record*) for signs from God. While I agree one ought to pray, read Scripture and seek the counsel of other Christians in order to ascertain God's direction, I do not agree "Reliance on 'signs from God' is an unsound, subjective process."

If we limit what we consider to be direction from God to what our reasoning minds can comprehend, as the writer suggests, we risk shutting out other ways the Lord may speak to us. To dismiss the possibility of signs from God is to reject much of the history of how the Lord has spoken — and, I believe, is *still* speaking — to his people. Miraculous burning bushes, rainbows, dream visions, "coincidences" and memorable circumstances in our lives — all can be signs from God. They should not be dismissed as "unsound" or "subjective" but are to be pondered with the heart and mind as possible signs from the Lord, the Holy One, who walks with us and desires that we open ourselves to all the ways he tries to communicate with us.

Ariane Wasilow, Cold Lake, Alta.

We publish as many letters as possible. All are subject to editing for meaning and space, and must include the correspondent's name and full address. Letters are intended to provide for the wide expression of views among our readers. Publication does not imply endorsement by either the *Record* or The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Freemasons

It is not the business of the church to launch a prejudicial attack on a benevolent, fraternal organization. Freemasons have consistently evidenced leadership qualities of the highest order in congregations and ascendant courts of the church.

At present, lodges are raising two million dollars to make neonatal hearing screening a reality in Ontario. They visit the sick, donate blood, raise funds to discharge a family mortgage, give donations to hospitals for equipment, award non-refundable bursaries for students, give funds for deafness research and grants for autistic homes — only a few of many acts of charity discharged without publicity.

Members pledge to display moral teachings in daily living and to revere God in thought, word and deed.

Evan H. Jones, London, Ont.

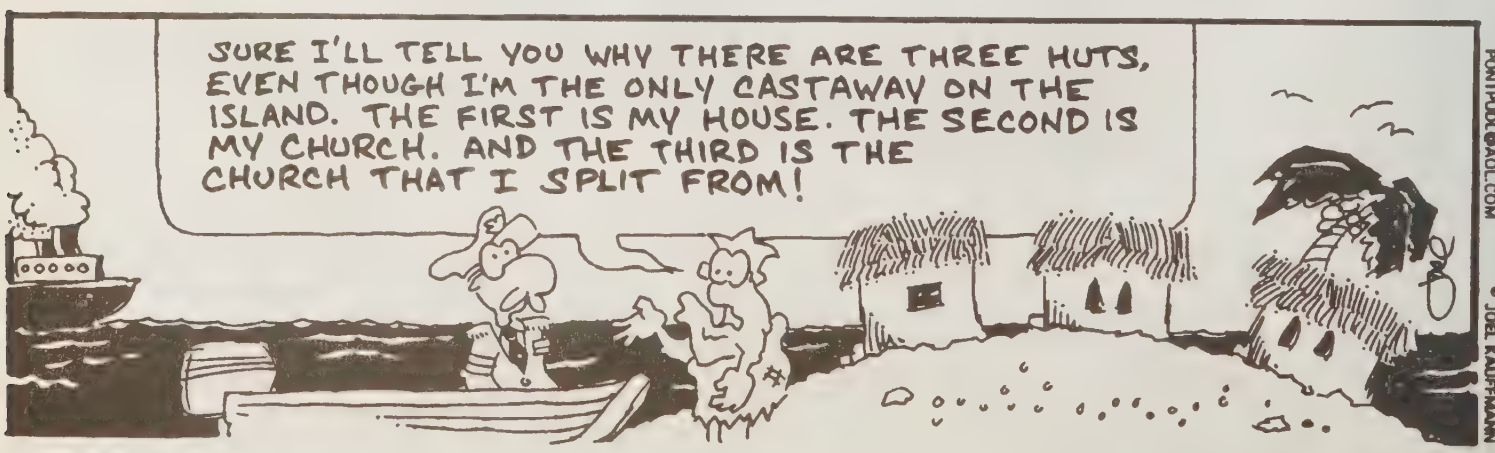
On the shelf

I read in *Christian Week* that the past Moderator has mused about putting *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (*WCF*) "on the shelf." Now that had a familiar ring, so I took down *The Story of Church Union in Canada* by S. D. Chown (that old Methodist workhorse of Church Union battles). He says that, during the Union negotiations, the point was made that it was time to put the *WCF* "on the shelf."

This all assumes the confession is now off the shelf. It is either being used to swat the dog and prop up the window, or it is lying open on the desk as the minister prepares his sermon or, with index finger marking the page, it is being wielded in the pulpit.

The genius of the confession is its room for high churchmen (like this Edwardian high churchman) and the most fervent evangelical. One wonders if it is the theology of the confession that pinches rather than its archaic language and unpopular references.

Pontius' Puddle



Shelve it and see if Froude isn't right: "It [Calvinism] will rise and rise again, or God is an illusion and man is as the beast which perisheth."

Malcolm Muth,
Port Dover, Ont.

Praise for Moderator

We at Tyndale St-George's have a special place in our hearts for Joe Reed, who was our Presbyterian co-director from 1980 to 1985. We valued then, and still value, his warm and loving personality, and his talent for reducing problems and differences to their proper perspective, and making plain the solutions.

We have followed with interest and concern his missionary career in Central America, and have welcomed him with thankfulness and joy on the occasions of his return visits to Montreal. We congratulate our founding partner, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, for its exceptional good fortune in having Joe as Moderator. We doubt not that all who come in contact with him will quickly recognize and deeply appreciate those sterling qualities that so endeared him to us.

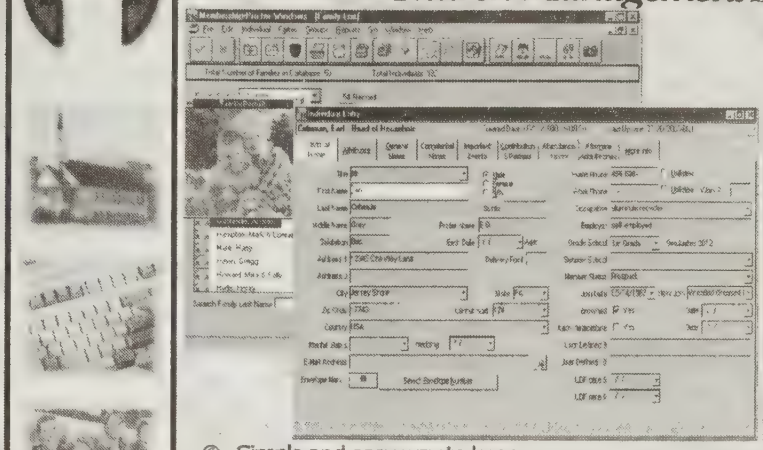
Allan Marjerison,
Tyndale St-George's Community Centre,
Montreal

The battles of Quebec

Geoffrey Johnston's article "The Battles of Quebec" (July/August *Record*) leaves me confused. What was the point of such an illogical diatribe that had no conclusion?

Johnston's attempt at a history lesson belongs more in a journal of Marxist thought than in a Christian publication. Other than an aside to meeting with some "parishioners" and the claim that some Christians attended a workshop in a church basement, there is no analysis, insight or understanding for a Christian reader to glean. I also found it impossible to get past the constant references to "imperialists," and the insidious anti-American invective, to gain anything of value from what I was reading.

Trade and economic issues are complex matters in this modern trading world that Christians struggle with and try to find an appropriate, scripturally based perspective. Our church's leaders require

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some basic courses in economics before they speak out on economic and trade policies. Until that occurs, I suggest we approach such issues with greater care and analysis.

Joseph Whiteside,
North Vancouver, B.C.

I hope this well-written essay with its history lesson is well-received and thoughtfully entertained. I also hope, for the perpetuation of the democracy of which we are so privileged to be a part, the "two groups of high-minded Imperialists" will participate at our nation's polling booths where true democracy should begin.

Jim Butcher,
Paisley, Ont.

Geoffrey Johnston is mistaken about Canada's first permanent settlement. Canada's first permanent settlement was at St. Croix Island in 1604 and, as this was not satisfactory, De Monts moved the village to Acadie (Nova Scotia since 1620) to a village called Port Royal in 1605. Champlain surveyed the whole area in 1604. Port Royal is still there today! Poutrincourt established a small settlement nearby and brought his family there to live in 1606.

Nova Scotia is often overlooked!

Jack Kimber,
Halifax

Access

The letter in the May *Record* about wheelchair access interested me. I know what Betty Methley's husband went through. I have progressive M.S. and have to use a walker or a wheelchair to get around. I have had to give up almost all activities that were once an important part of my life. The church I attend does have a ramp and a chair-lift, so I can attend worship and activities in the lower hall. For this, I am very thankful. However, not all churches and public buildings have handicap access. Many doors are shut to those who are disabled because there are too many steps to get into a building and/or no accessible washroom on the main level. I feel frustrated and left out. I desperately need the

friendship and support of a church family, friends and neighbours.

I believe church congregations and the community need to be more aware of the obstacles and difficulties facing disabled people. I hope we can all work together to make things easier for those who cannot climb steps and open heavy doors.

Charlotte Johnston,
Cameron, Ont.

A unique position

When I disclose my occupation, I am frequently asked, "What *is* it you do all day?" Although I was offended by the comment at first, I now chuckle and state that an office administrator in a large and busy church is probably similar to the position in a community centre. Church offices employ individuals as accomplished as their peers in medical, legal, commercial and industrial positions.

At Crieff Hills Community in Puslinch, Ontario, church secretaries and office administrators meet once a year for a three-day seminar. The one consistent comment is that we are often not taken as seriously as our non-ecclesiastical counterparts. This includes salaries and benefits. We agree unanimously our positions are unique, enabling us to do "mission" work on a daily basis. We are the face of the congregation for those calling or coming into the church building. We are often the first contact for individuals who have lost a loved one, seek emotional or financial assistance, or require general information about the church. Constant phone calls and visitors are integral to the service we provide as we attempt to complete our daily tasks, frequently to deadlines.

Church office administrators have diverse tasks, including: reception, coordinating volunteers, record keeping and computer data entry, rentals and bookings of church space, ticket sales and promotion for special events, maintenance of office equipment, purchase of supplies, preparation and distribution of numerous documents, liaison for groups and functions, annual report preparation, church building tour guide, staff assistance, preparation of Sunday bulletins. All of us devote some of our spare time to the life and work of the church where we are employed.

At Central Church in Hamilton, Ontario, my position is full-time. A team of trained volunteers makes it possible for me to accomplish my work. Our minister, staff, congregational groups and individuals are all involved in the life of the church and the community. What a dynamic environment in which to be employed! It is truly a unique position.

Patricia Oosterveld,
Hamilton, Ont.



Participants in the annual church secretaries/office administrators conference at Crieff Hills Community, Puslinch, Ont.

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Joe Reed



Always a new beginning

Snapshots of disaster and hope from El Salvador

Mourners jockeyed for a spot under the almond tree. The tropical sun beat down upon the dusty street. The closest friends jammed into the garage. The sheet iron roof transformed it into an oven. We met to bury Roger, 25, a student in his last year of university. He had drowned at a church outing during El Salvador's long weekend in August.

Those packed inside sang choruses and heard consoling words. Those of us outside chatted about the strangest things, perhaps not to think about it all. No one should have to bury a child, of course. But life and death so intertwine that one becomes part of the other. A dozen university classmates talked about exams and sports and Roger. Neighbours talked about the city. Others talked about the Baptist work in the country.

Later, I visited the temporary homes of victims of the January earthquakes. Here, the quake did not cut a single swath down the mountainside, sweeping everything in its path; rather, it levelled homes selectively, destroying only the most vulnerable, in pockets.

Yet, the homes we visited brimmed with hope and gladness. The people have moved from tragedy to new beginnings, largely because of your generosity expressed through Presbyterian World Service and Development. The lucky ones will rebuild a dozen of their homes beginning next week. Others scrounge and rebuild as best they can. Standing proud and hopeful in front of her temporary shack, a woman points to a cement platform — all that remains of her former home. On that same foundation, new walls will rise.

That evening, another powerful moment: the first Communion service ever in the tiny Compassionate God Baptist Church, started only five months ago. Even though the sermon tells how all are welcome at the Table, although none are worthy, a dozen peasants still feel too sinful to partake. But others do. Work-gnarled hands reach for the bread and take the cup, and a new church begins, not only with hope and expectation, but committed to service and love in the community. Because of Pastor Felix and this congregation, the new homes will rise — not only for church members but also for those in the community who need them most.

Night falls as we leave the church and people cry with emotion. Next door, a small boy (perhaps seven or eight) in tattered trousers bends over a book as a candle flickers. He mouths a few words from the page he scrutinizes. With a last-minute attempt to learn a few words with which to greet the visitors, he cries out in English, "Goodbye, come again." I, for one, will certainly try.

Early the next morning, we return to the capital and pause for a few minutes in Santa Tecla. It was here the January earthquakes shook the loose earth of Balsam Hill and sent a slide of earth and trees and rock and rubble down, burying part of a suburb along with its inhabitants. Someone has placed a bouquet in a milk carton — in memory of a family member whose body will never be found. How flimsy the walls of the devastated houses look! What a horrible roar the slide would have made! A few blocks away, workers sit in plastic chairs, taking a break and having soft drinks. Under an almond tree.

Standing proud and hopeful in front of her temporary shack, a woman points to a cement platform — all that remains of her former home.

On that same foundation, new walls will rise

And, so, in 12 hours, it all comes together: life and death, of course, but also worship. And hope, and love, and caring. New beginnings and saying goodbye to those who should not have died. Flimsy houses and new ones. And the frustration of knowing not everyone will be helped; but, by God's grace, all will start over.

And it happened in El Salvador, under the almond trees.

Joe Reed

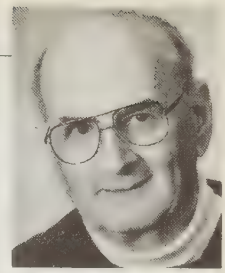
Moderator's itinerary

October 14
St. Peter's, Madoc, Ont.

October 21
St. Andrew's, Hagersville, Ont.

October 24-29
Presbytery of Miramichi, N.B.

R. Sheldon MacKenzie



A code for teachers

"Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be discharged"

About four years ago, I was given a paper entitled "The 1870 Code for Teachers." The code, presumably, was distributed to all schoolteachers in the jurisdiction by the Edmonton Public Schools Authority. It was given to me by a retired district schoolteacher here in Pictou County, Nova Scotia. Only one item short of the Ten Commandments, the code outlines the way male and female teachers were to behave with respect to the discharge of their responsibilities. The situation for female teachers was even more demanding than it was for men.

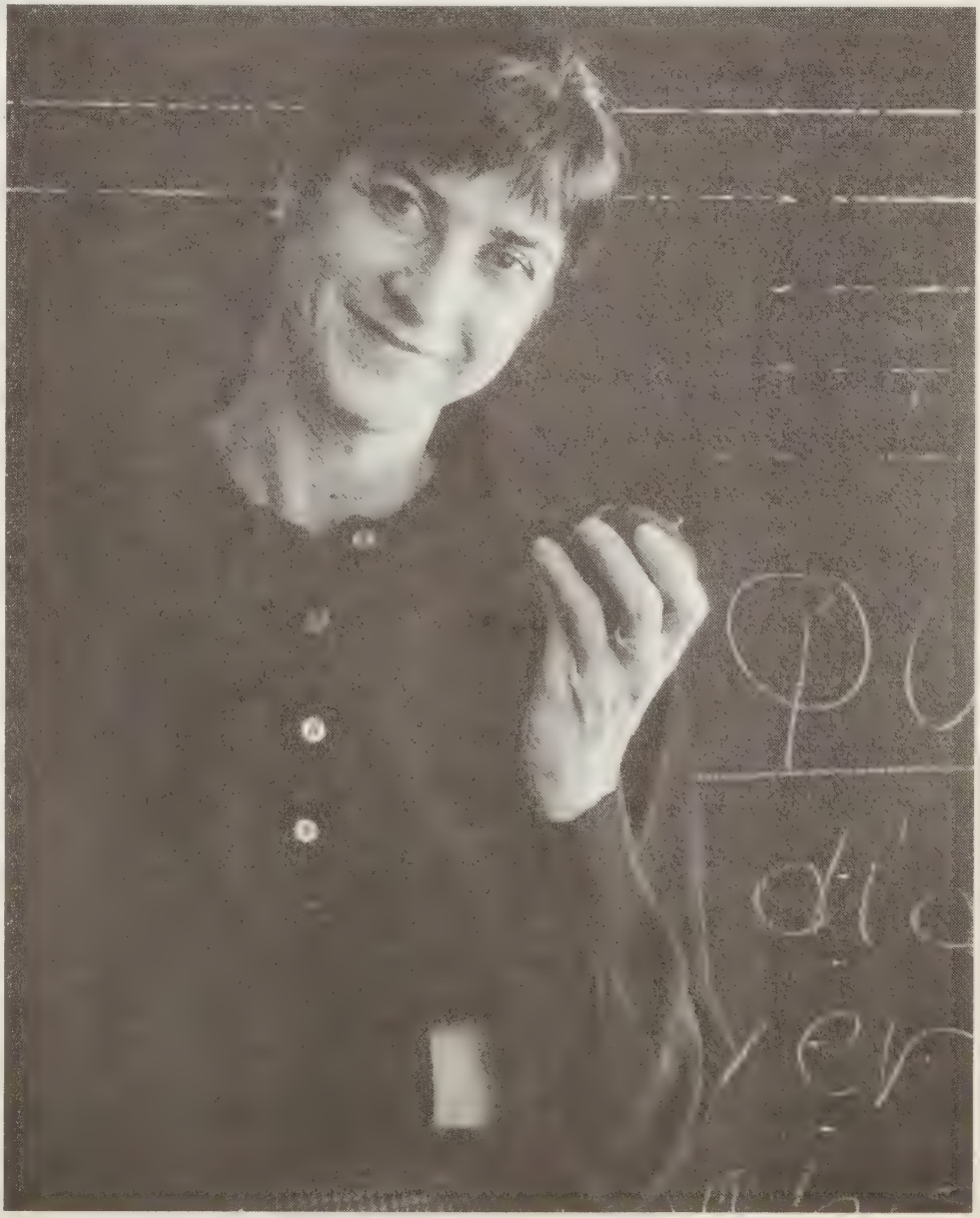
Of the nine commandments, there is room here for only three or four. Number 4 reads: "Men teachers may take one night off each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly." There is/was a particular denominational school authority in Newfoundland that suggests its teachers "attend church regularly." A former teacher in that system reported that not to attend church regularly was to risk forfeiting his teaching position with that board. As he had done.

According to Number 6, "Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be discharged." The unseemly conduct is nowhere defined. Maybe just as well in view of the tender sensibilities of modern readers.

The matter of salary scales and salary increases is dealt with in Number 9: "The teacher who performs his duties regularly and faithfully and without fault for five years, will be given an increase of 25 cents a week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves." There is no mention of any salary increase for women.

One hundred years ago, when my mother was a teenager and taught in little rural schools, the salary was barely at survival level. At one time, I had a record of her salary from the early 1920s. It was not a queen's ransom, although it was better than that provided by the Edmonton School Authority. At that time, too, male teachers were paid at a higher level than their female counterparts for precisely the same work!

Finally, there was the "reminder" of



activities forbidden to men: "Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool halls or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop, shall give good reason to suspect his worth, integrity and honesty."

Once upon a time, there were unwritten expectations not only for schoolteachers but for people in other professions as well. University professors, for example, wore black academic gowns, especially to class. Doctors, in general, wore white coats; those who didn't were dressed in business suits. The clergy, too, were expected to look like clergy. Nowadays, a clergy visiting the sick may occasionally look more like a lumberjack on his weekend off from the woods! Lord Taylor, one-time president of Memorial University in St. John's, on learning I was a minister, remarked: "I expect my vicars to look like vicars!" His remark was made while the two of us were busily gathering caplin on the shore at Middle Cove. (Within recent memory, "vicars" of whatever denomination *did* look like "vicars.")

Some years ago in Scotland, there was an expectation that lawyers did not engage in any business matters in which they might be regarded either as investors or partners. Now, we understand, such participation is commonplace. And, in a few cases, they even reach the House of Commons.

Alan Dershowitz, well-known Harvard law professor, guest lecturer and author, recently published his splendid book *The Genesis of Justice*. It deals with the early chapters in the book of Genesis and their implications for our legal system and religious lives. The New Testament also provides clear guidelines not only for our individual discipleship but also for social and community behaviour based on those things Christians most sincerely believe.

And, so, "The 1870 Code for Teachers": move over! We have one better, much better by far. R

R. Sheldon MacKenzie, who lives in New Glasgow, N.S., is a retired professor from Memorial University in St. John's and a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

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pastoral epistles from peter plymley II

My dear editor:

I came across an interesting paragraph in the bits and bites column of the local daily. Apparently, there is a dire shortage of clergy in all the "major" Protestant denominations in British Columbia, particularly on Vancouver Island. The reporter kindly included Presbyterians.

This news came as a shock to me. As I often do in times of distress, I turned to those pages that reveal more than the text itself can express: the vacancy listings in the *Presbyterian Record*. In the July/August issue, six vacancies in British Columbia were listed. Barring Nanaimo, they were all on the mainland. I was somewhat relieved. I had thought if Canada's answer to the Côte d'Azur couldn't attract interested candidates, what hope for a four-point charge in rural New Brunswick?

But my relief was short-lived. I noticed there were a lot of vacancies elsewhere. *Are* we short of clergy? *Is* there a problem? I decided to conduct a succinct phone survey.

J. Paddyngton Bayer is always pleased to be consulted and was my first call. "In England in the 19th and early 20th centuries" (J.P.'s answers have a tendency to begin far back and take a running leap), "the pattern of landed families was for the eldest son to take over the family estates. The second would be steered toward a military career, and the third, if harmless enough and otherwise useless, into the church. We should be as fortunate. Today, the call to the cloth" (Trollope lives!) "is not even a third-rate option for the middling and mediocre — never mind the best and the brightest."

I gently reminded J.P. I wanted to quote him. An exclusively masculine reference from the Church of England of over a century ago might not provide the laser-like insight for which he is known. I also reminded him (tactfully, I hope) his young associate at St. George-North Park, Rev. Millicent (Millimac) MacPherson, is not only capable, but bright and sought after. After a significant silence, he shot back, "There are always exceptions!"

I thought it better to conclude our conversation and call back rather than ask him to transfer me to Millimac who was next on my list.

The gist of J.P.'s complaint having been conveyed to her, I was taken aback when she said: "The old boy has a point. Peel away the antimacassar and aspidistra context and he's right. When I told my friends I was going to be a Presbyterian minister, they looked at me with pity

Where have all the ministers gone?

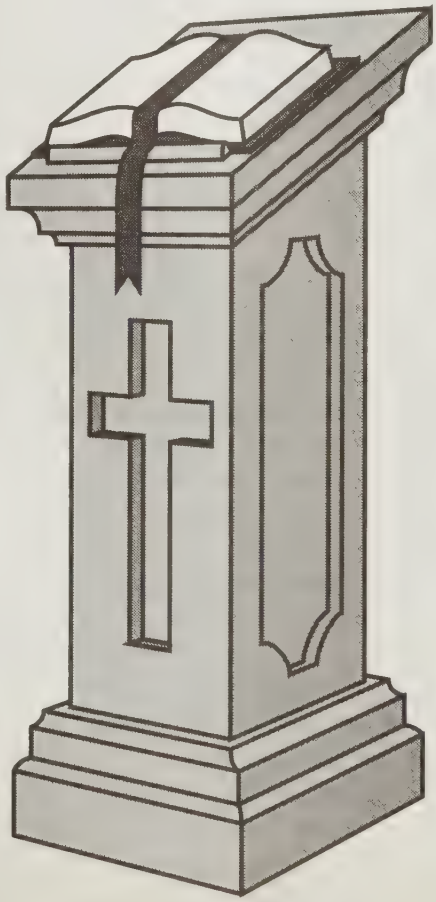
in their eyes ... and astonishment. 'But you have great grades!' they said. Or 'Don't do anything rash now. I didn't think you were *that* religious!' Somehow, I never linked 'rash' with being a minister but, in a way, they were right. We've changed from the post-graduate, academic model to a proliferation of certificates and 'trade' degrees. We lost our nerve about theology a long time ago; but, where we used to long to be taken seriously by the English department and the economists, now we are happy to gain recognition from leisure studies.

"We're picking up a lot of recently traumatized people — a divorce or another life crisis — who want to heal as they help others to heal. It's more like a post-operative patient wanting to take up surgery. And, Plymley ... "

"Yes?"

"I'm NOT just talking about women!"

"Understood."



The last call (that I'll report) was made to a retired veteran who toiled in church offices in the days before the practice ceased of appointing graduates to their first and, usually, aid-receiving congregation. I asked if it would be a good idea to restore the practice and, thereby, shorten the list of vacancies.

"Can't be done. Two-income families, Plymley. 'Dear, we've been assigned to Blistered Elbow. You can find another job in advertising there.' I don't think so. Anyway, I gave up the idea when graduates began to tell us they would only go to a charge that had a manse with a dining room big enough to take a 14-foot antique table. Hardly in the footsteps of St. Paul.

"You know what *would* help? Allow presbyteries to get rid of the minimum stipend. Guarantee full medical/dental benefits, a *furnished* manse and utilities, maybe an annual RRSP, even a glebe" (he chuckled) "and let the congregation pay what it can above that, for however long it can. Call the clergyperson the theologian/pastor-in-residence like the writer-in-residence programs at universities. Six months, maybe a year, and out. Still, better than nothing. But remember, Plymley, many are called, but most are frozen."

Yours, naturally abhorring vacancies and vacuums,

Peter Plymley II

"Does God love Gabe?"

by Gloria Troyer

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24



Dylan Troyer (left) with his friend Gabe Roden on a camping trip, two days before Gabe committed suicide.

A few years ago, my son's best friend committed suicide. Dylan (my son) and Gabe, both teenagers at the time, left town on the Friday morning. They travelled up to the Bruce Peninsula for a couple of nights of camping. They returned on Sunday in good spirits, laughing and joking about their adventure. Gabe ate a big meal and then said he had to go home.

Grieving adolescents came to see Dylan — hoping to find the answer to the pressing question that was on all of our minds: why?

I knew Gabe's parents were away for the week at a summer cottage, so I suggested he stay overnight at our house. But Gabe insisted he needed to go home to take care of the family dog. The next night, he telephoned for Dylan. As fate would have it, Dylan had gone out for the evening and missed the call. The next morning, Gabe's 18-year-old girlfriend found him on his bed. He was dead. He had shot himself in the head with his father's hunting rifle.

A few weeks later, another male teenager in the same small community of Elora, Ontario, committed suicide. This second death prompted a public meeting where experts were called in to try and answer some of the frequent questions that arise when death occurs by suicide.

What happened in this small town in Ontario is not unique. According to data from Statistics Canada (1997), suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24 following motor vehicle death. According to a United Nations report, "The Progress of Nations 1994," Canadian youth 15-19 ranked third highest in suicide rate of 23 countries after New Zealand and Finland. The United States ranked fifth. Over the past two decades, most industrialized countries have seen the rate of adolescent suicide holding steady or increasing.

More than 25,000 adolescents in Canada attempt suicide annually. An average of 294 youth commit suicide each year. The most common methods of youth suicide between 1993 and 1997 were hanging, firearms and motor vehicle exhaust gases. The most common methods used in attempts were drug overdose or poisoning. Studies show a significant percentage of adolescents contemplate, plan and/or attempt suicide without seeking or receiving help. Males are less likely than females to seek help from any source.

When death occurs by suicide, there are many unanswered questions and many things to work out within ourselves. The morning after this tragedy occurred, I felt confused and angry with myself and angry with Gabe. We had a steady stream of teenagers coming to the house and what seemed like hundreds of telephone calls. Grieving adolescents came to see Dylan — hoping to find the answer to the pressing question that was on all of our minds: why?

Teens are in a transitional period between childhood and adulthood, and this can lead to confusion and anxiety. Teens with an adequate support network of friends, family, religious affiliation, peer groups or extracurricular activities may have an outlet to deal with their everyday frustrations. Teens without an adequate support network may feel disconnected and isolated from their family and peer group. These teens are at risk for suicide if they are unable to deal with their problems.

Depression is also common among teenagers. The feelings of helplessness and worthlessness that can accompany it, along with disturbances in sleep or appetite, can fuel a downward spiral of health and grades, further clouding perspective. Even thinking seems intolerably difficult.

New Canadian research suggests there is a genetic reason why some people commit suicide, supporting a widely held belief that suicide can run in families. Studies have found that some people who are depressed have altered chemical levels in their bodies. Other studies show that aggressive and impulsive people who make violent suicide

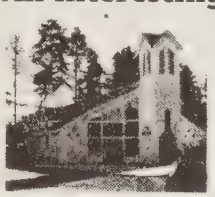
Helping to prevent suicide

If your teenager or someone you know has been depressed, you should look closely for signs that he or she might be thinking of suicide:

- Has his/her personality changed dramatically?
- Is he/she having trouble with a girlfriend/boyfriend? Or is he/she having trouble getting along with other friends or with parents? Has he/she withdrawn from people they used to feel close to?
- Is the quality of schoolwork going down?
- Is he/she acting like a rebel in an unexplained and severe way?
- Is she pregnant and finding it hard to cope with this major life change?
- Has he/she run away from home?
- Is the teenager abusing drugs or alcohol?
- Have eating or sleeping habits changed?
- Has his or her appearance changed for the worse?
- Is he/she giving away prized possessions?
- Is he/she writing notes or poems about death?
- Does he/she talk about suicide, even jokingly? Has he/she said such things as, "I can't take it anymore" or "No one cares about me"? Threatening to kill oneself precedes four out of five suicidal deaths.

If you suspect a teenager might be thinking about suicide, don't remain silent. Suicide is preventable, but you must act quickly. Ask the teen about it. Don't be afraid to use the word "suicide." This does not "put ideas into their heads," but it does free the young person to talk about what is really going on and to reach out for help. Ask him/her to talk about feelings. Listen carefully and don't dismiss any problems or get angry. Remove all lethal weapons from your home — including guns, pills, kitchen utensils and ropes. Seek professional help. (Start with your local hospital emergency department.)

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attempts have reduced amounts of serotonin, a key brain chemical.

It doesn't seem right that a teenager who has lived for such a short time would choose to die. But adolescents who can't get over their depression sometimes do kill themselves. Psychologist Pamela Cantor says suicidal people "want to save themselves and murder the sadness." But Dr. Yves Lamontagne, president of the Quebec College of Physicians, says, "All mental illnesses are treatable."

Gabe's death had a profound effect on our family. Shortly afterwards, someone said to me, "Get over it, he wasn't even your own boy." But one does not "get over" a suicide. The effects may stabilize, but the loss is forever felt. Personal values and beliefs are shattered. The individual is changed emotionally.

Suicide is a traumatic loss — sudden, unexpected and often violent. The grief it causes is intense and prolonged. And suicide is still stigmatized. This may cause survivors to withdraw, which can cause "disenfranchised grief." This serious grief reaction arises when loss cannot be expressed openly. Survivors feel responsible for their loss. Those who witness the suicide or find the body may suffer post-traumatic stress. Many feel anger toward the victim, themselves or others. Every survivor needs immediate support at the time of the loss, but this was not available in our community.

Feeling overwhelmed, I telephoned Peter Darch, the minister at St. Andrew's in Guelph. I had known him for 19 years, and this was not the first time I had relied on his spiritual strength for advice and counselling. He was truly alarmed at this situation because he, like many religious leaders world-wide, was asking himself, "What is happening to our youth?"

Since Gabe's family had a private funeral, we decided to hold a memorial service in our home at which Peter would officiate. It was a hot July evening. I had baked cookies in the early morning and made gallons of lemonade. Dylan called as many friends as he could to notify them of the service. My husband, Marc, and I rearranged the furniture and bought several white candles and some cut flowers for the table. Over 30 teens showed up and crammed into our dining room. Some sat on chairs, but most sat on the floor.

Resources

- The Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program, PO Box 644, Westminster, Colorado 80030-0644 U.S.A.; ask4help@yellowribbon.org; www.yellowribbon.org.
- The Suicide Information & Education Centre (SIEC), located in Calgary, is a reference library holding more that 25,000 resources on suicide. SIEC Alert is a quick reference guide to some of the newest resources for school suicide prevention programs. Contact SIEC at: 201-1615 - 10th Avenue SW, Calgary, Alta. T3C 0J7; siec@siec.ca; www.siec.ca.

Peter said a prayer, a positive prayer in celebration of Gabe's life. I remember what he said: "I never knew Gabe but I can feel by the love in this room that he was a good person." He shared a few personal stories of his own regarding untimely death and then passed out little pieces of paper with pencils to everyone in the room. He told us to write down anonymously any question we might have regarding Gabe's death. The pieces of paper were gathered and, then, Peter read and answered each question. The question that had an impact on me was, "Does God love Gabe even though he took his own life?"

Peter answered, "Yes, God does love Gabe, and recognizes the fact that his pain was too much for him to bear."

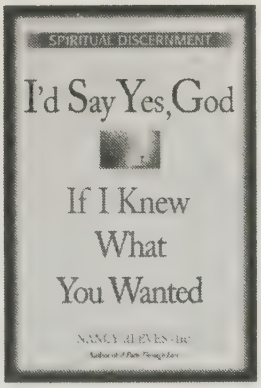
After all the questions were answered, Peter passed out small white candles to each person. He asked each of us to share with the group something special about our relationship with Gabe. Marc was the first person to say something, then Peter lit his candle. The next person said something, and Marc lit his candle; and so on until we all stood with lit candles. More than 30 young people shared this emotional moment. Then Peter said a closing prayer. That memorial service was the beginning of a healing journey for all who attended.

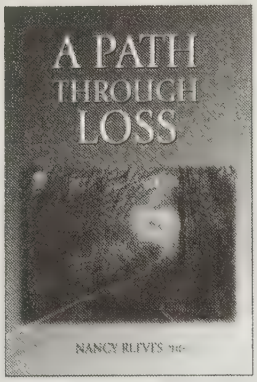
Gabe's death made me realize each of us plays a role in the lives of teenagers and in the prevention of teen suicide. Suicide affects all of us. Let's talk about it. Collectively, we can make a difference!

This article is dedicated to the memory of Gabe Roden (1979-1998). R

Gloria Troyer is free-lance writer/researcher living in Guelph, Ont.

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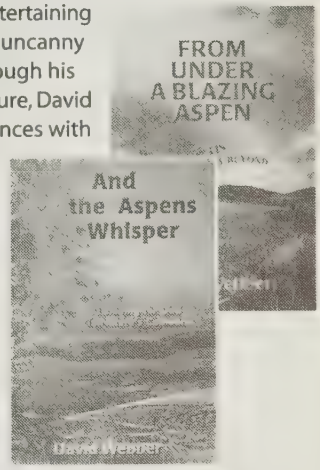
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The Kirk of St. James

For Calvin, "vocation" means neither a "spiritual" nor a "worldly" calling but, rather, th

The other



by Joseph C. McLelland

Laity in the Reformed tradition

Why the service of God?

Thesis 1: *The ministry of the laity is practised not in church but in the world outside.*

Once again, the "ministry of the laity" is a hot topic. *Déjà vu!* Yet, none the less important, perhaps decisive for the church now and tomorrow. It was the 1950s when the laity were last rediscovered as vital to mission and outreach — God's "frozen assets" (Hendrik Kraemer). Those were heady days, not least for our church. The Committee on the Laity was formed at the national level, and Presbyterian Men was established, modelled on other movements, notably in the "southern" Presbyterian Church. When that church held its men's conference in Dallas in 1963, it commissioned a Canadian Presbyterian theologian to write its theme book, *Living for Christ.* And Caledon Covenanters resulted from the dynamism of the ginger group that included Stuart Coles, Donald Wade and Harold Jackson: a minister, a professor and a layman.

The central idea of the day was that the church lives by a rhythm — Sunday worship and weekly worldliness. The Lord's Day is special: the gathered church where worship is celebrated, with the ordained Minister of Word and Sacraments leading as teaching elder, a sort of congregational rabbi or "minister of public works." The centrality of God's Word "orders" the laity for their work of witness and service. In turn, "the other six days" are, therefore, the special vocation of the laity, the church scattered, in their rightful and normal arena of service.

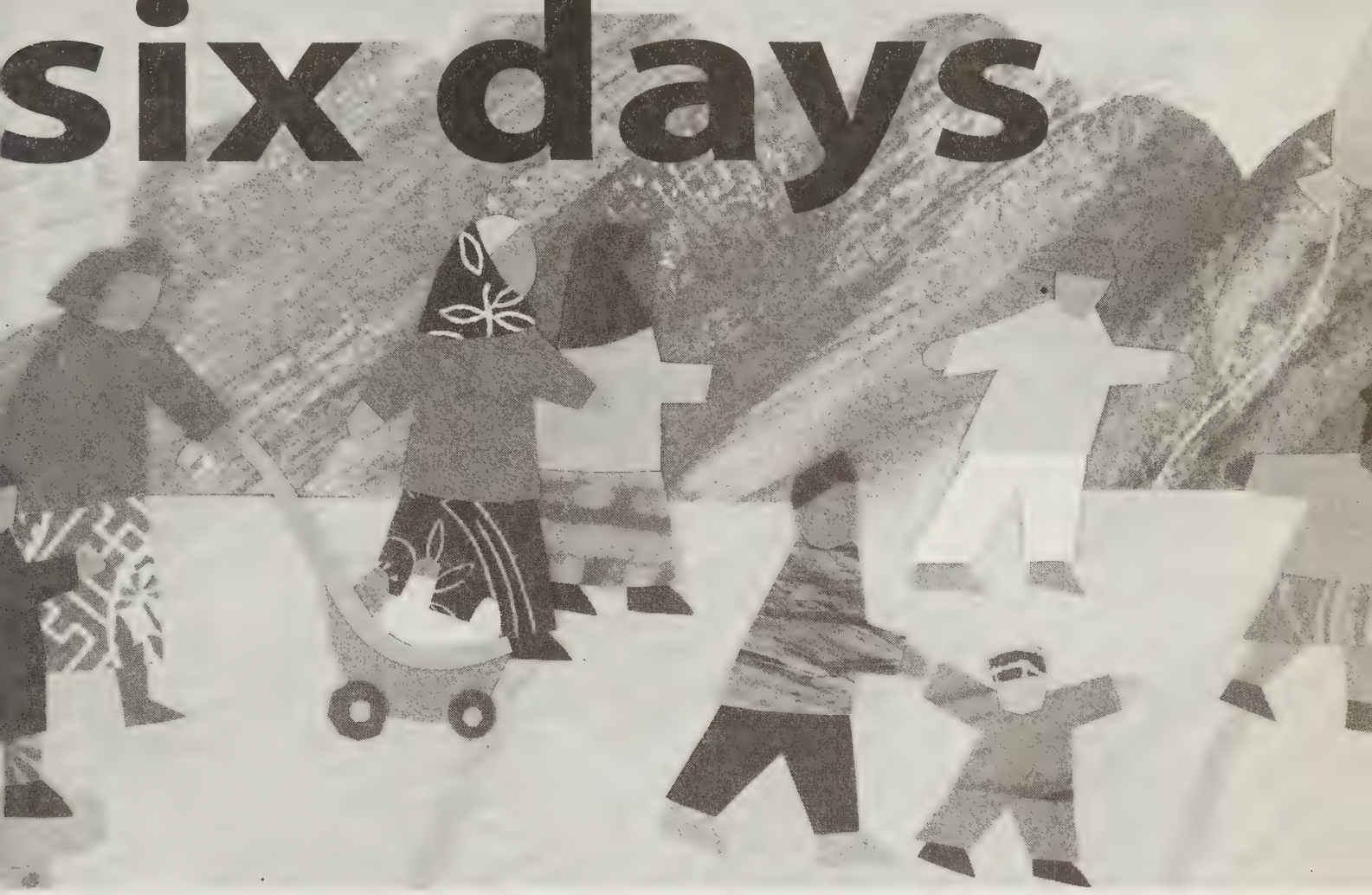
When we get things out of order, as if only the clergy are responsible for witness and outreach while the laity merely listen or obey, we miss the heart of our Reformed faith. Thus, we must distinguish clergy and laity: those with special calling to serve the Word to the people and, consequently, the people's work in the outside world. We need to set laypeople free from the illusion that what we do in church is enough to make a Christian. We need to turn the church inside out so the people may find their proper worship and service and stewardship in their daily life on the other six days of the week.

The Reformation did not merely rebel against Mass and papal hierarchy. Its main thrust was to recover the Word of God — in Scripture and in sermon — for the laity. The medieval church had developed a rigid caste system, with clergy on top and laity below the line. Thus, "vocation" dropped from heaven onto the clergy but hardly filtered on down. No one saw the tragic error of this development more clearly than Martin Luther did. He had harsh things to say about the "religious" of his day — monks and

tal claim of the living Lord on our vocation, on our every moment and every action.

— Joseph McLelland

six days



nuns, priests and bishops and popes. Rather than having a vocation, he believed they were, in fact, parasites on society, begging and taking stipends in exchange for saying endless Masses. In turn, this drastically reduced the significance of the laity.

> But the crazy blind world does not see this and instead despises these callings so shamefully that it must hurt a godly heart. No, says the world, why should I be in such a low secular calling? I want to serve God and be a monk or nun, a priest or hermit. Such impertinence increased until the world was filled with monasteries and convents of all varieties and sects so that it now crawls and swarms with "spiritual" people everywhere.

Luther turned things on their side: two parallel vocations, clergy and laity. Both have equal access to divine calling; both are equally "religious" *and* "secular." Indeed, the laity enjoy *three vocations* that Luther identified in their fullness:

> God ordains three kinds of callings; in them, one can live with God and a clear conscience. The first is the family, the second political and secular authority, the third the church or the ministry.

Think of those three. First, our family life should reflect the covenant-love with which God has graced us, the bonds of sexual partnership and the gift of children. In these days of dysfunctional families, when sex is substituted for love and bodily functions are perverted in the name of liberty, Christians must stand against the stream and make bold proclamation of their faith in a Creator whose intention for human relations is clear in his Word. The ideal of family life, the sacramental nature of marriage, the covenant to us and to our children — such an agenda needs clear and constant attention today.

Second, in our communities and circumstances, politics has become a dirty word. Too often, "power corrupts" so that we become cynical about politicians at every level of government. Here, the "ministry of the laity" means learning better ways of being good citizens and entering the political arena directly if that seems our calling.

The third calling is regular attendance at public worship, "diligent use of the means of grace" as we vowed when joining the church. Besides this, some laity with special gifts are called to work within the church, too, in eldership and management, in teaching and fellowship groups. It's only when such church work becomes a substitute and rival for witness on the outside that it threatens the proper ministry of the laity.

How to serve God?

Thesis 2: The service of God takes the form of the stewardship of our gifts on behalf of others.

Times have changed since Luther's day — his mighty protest against "the religious" on behalf of ordinary Christians seems outdated. We see this starkly in Quebec where the old tradition is disappearing: countless monasteries and convents, priests and nuns in flowing robes, crowded seminaries and multiple clergy in churches. More significant for us today is the positive way John Calvin, Luther's follower, developed the twin ideas of *vocation* and *stewardship*. So insistent was he on the "work ethic" for daily labour that a thesis about "the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism" was advanced by sociologist Max Weber. It has been criticized aplenty but still has a certain truth and a warning. The "Calvinist virtues" or "Puritan ethic" stressed hard work as a religious duty bringing its worldly rewards. These, in turn, proved God's blessing; the poor, on the other hand, were responsible for their condition because they did not practise these virtues. One sees this in Charles Dickens' works, notably *Hard Times*. It's one reason Hugh MacLennan's novels berate Canadian Calvinists for their proud assurance of divine grace. Thus, individual piety often denied social justice and led to complacency about unjust structures:

> God bless the squire and his relations,
> And help us all to keep our stations.

Calvin himself was, in fact, more realistic and more socially minded. (Is this why so many Reformed theologians are "socialist"?) He saw the lordship of Christ over all of life:

> The Lord commands every one of us, in all the actions of life, to regard his vocation ... Every individual's line of life, therefore, is, as it were, a post assigned him by the Lord, that he may not wander about in uncertainty all his days.

This sense of direct vocation leads into our responsibility for the goods entrusted to us. That is, *vocation* is inexorably tied to *stewardship*. Our "calling" is a stimulus to action, a goad to Christian living. But the guide as to how to fulfil that calling is provided by the unique Christian insight into the service of God. We call Sunday morning worship "divine service." And so it is: led by clergy who are trained in right prayer and preaching, in breaking the bread of God's Word in Scripture and sacrament. But that Sunday serving of "the iron rations of a Christian" ends with a benediction: blessing us in what we are about to engage on as we leave behind the special service. Its communion with God gives us direction for what is ahead on the other six days. Calvin wrote:

> Let this, then, be our rule for benignity and beneficence, that whatever God has conferred on us, which enables us to assist our neighbour, we are the stewards of it, and must one day render an account of our stewardship; and that the only right dispensation of what has been committed to us, is that which is regulated by the law of love.

The Christian must plunge himself into the life of the godless world without attempting to gloss over its ungodliness with a veneer of religion, or trying to transfigure it. He must live a "worldly" life and so participate in the suffering of God.

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Where to serve (where *IS* "God")?

Thesis 3: We are called to serve God as God appears in person in our neighbours.

Calvin gets radical at this point: who is our neighbour? Anyone we meet who is in need. Why? Because that person bears the image of God. What? *Every*one? Yes:

> whoever you meet who needs your aid, you have no reason to refuse to help him. ... Say, "He is contemptible and worthless"; but the Lord shows him to be one to whom he has deigned to give the beauty of his image ... God, as it were, has put him in his own place so that you may recognize toward him the many and great benefits with which God has bound you to himself ... the image of God, which recommends him to you, is worthy of your giving yourself and all your possessions.

This startling argument ("has put him in his own place"!) concludes:

> remember not to consider men's evil intention but to look on the image of God in them, which cancels and effaces their transgressions, and with its beauty and dignity allures us to love and embrace them.

Thus, "to be a human being is to be a living icon of God" (Wolterstorff). Regardless of whether these others are Christian or friend or even likeable, they represent God to us — they *present* God to us. In commenting on *Genesis*, Calvin insists that, if we refuse to help others, God "deems himself violated in their person ... no one can be injurious to his brother without wounding God himself." He reiterates this in many places, in biblical commentaries and sermons and the theological *Institutes*. For instance:

> Let a Moor or a Barbarian come among us, and yet inasmuch as he is a man, he brings with him a looking glass in which we may see that he is our brother and neighbour. [Sermon on Galatians 6:9]

For further reflection and discussion

- Do you agree with Thesis 1 that "church work" is not the primary locale for the ministry of the laity and may even be hazardous to your spiritual health?
- What are some practical ways in which "vocation and stewardship" may be carried out in your own situation, as an individual and as a congregation.
- If it is true that we serve God by serving our neighbours, what does this tell us about the kind of God we are dealing with and where to find God?

Resources

Check your church library for Joseph C. McLelland's books *The Other Six Days* (1959) and *Living for Christ* (1963).

Ah, now! This means we can do all the "church work" we want, but it may be the road to hell. If we neglect our calling to extend in stewardship our goods to those in need, whatever their race or creed or colour, be they outcast or socially undesirable, be they enemies of our country or our religion — if we turn aside, we are hurting *God*, continuing to crucify our Lord Jesus Christ. In short, we honour and obey the loving will of God by recognizing his living icons and rendering them what is due to God.

Conclusion

Let us sum up: what is the *content* of this vocation and how do we fulfil it? It's a simple but daring and radical answer, which we can now put as a logical syllogism, a demonstrative proof that brooks no meddling:

Since God does not *need* anything, we honour God by honouring his image.

The image of God is found in human beings.

Therefore, when we care for others in need, offer our goods to them, bind their wounds and nurture their bodies, we are doing these things to God.

And conversely: if we neglect them, reject them, wound and harm them, we do it to God himself!

Dietrich Bonhoeffer called Jesus "the Man for others." Insofar as faith binds us to Christ as members of his Body and God's family, we are "the group for other groups" — the model or example of what human life together should be, serving the "common wealth," uniting worship and service and stewardship. Remember the opening gambit of our Shorter Catechism? Our "chief end" is "to glorify God and enjoy him forever." That is, honour God as Creator and Lord, and find in Jesus the Christ an elder brother who joins us to himself and, therefore, to God as one family with multiple vocations called to a surprising Joy. So the Reformed teaching on the ministry of the laity is no doubt complex and deep but not, thereby, difficult to grasp — simply, perhaps, hard to practise! R

Joseph C. McLelland is emeritus professor of McGill University and The Presbyterian College, Montreal, and a contributing editor of this magazine.

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Going home

by Graham Kennedy

Encountering India — the old and the new

My parents, Samuel and Anna Maria Kennedy, were the 59th and 60th missionaries from Northern Ireland to the Irish Presbyterian Mission in Gujarat, India, serving from 1945-1956. In January 1956, when I was nine, we left India by boat from Bombay.

On January 14, 2001, Cathy (my wife) and I landed in Mumbai (Bombay's new name) after a nine-hour flight from London, England. Though just after midnight, the terminal was crowded and the air musty. Our luggage arrived at an unmarked carousel. Several hundred of us (mostly women) scrambled to retrieve our belongings in the cramped quarters before taking the challenge to find Terminal 2 for the 5:45 a.m. flight to Ahmedabad. Welcome to India.

I remembered the noise and bustle of India — with taxis, coolies, merchants and swarms of people vying with each other in a desperate effort to make a living.

"Taxi? The bus never comes, you know. It's always late and, probably, won't be here for another hour at least."

"No thanks," I said, "we'll wait. It will come." And it did.

Familiar, too, were acts of kindness, graciousness and warmth that always was India. Also the sense of industry and initiative of a people seriously engaged in struggling to catch up to a world that had turned over another century clock while India was still running to measure up to the standards of the 20th and, in some places, the 19th century.

Several Indian people approached us in the airport to talk. I remembered them from the line-ups to the washrooms. Now resident in Canada, they were returning to visit their homeland. In the sea of faces beyond the security barriers, my wife and I were the strangers from afar, although I was born in India!

In Mumbai at 5 a.m., the customs officer wanted to know what was in my carry-on bag. He pointed to the little box of ball-point pens stamped with the Canadian maple leaf (for Indian children). I offered him one, but he refused it loudly and put it back into my bag. The next day's *India Times* recorded the discovery and arrest of airport customs officers engaged in a smuggling operation in Ahmedabad, with pay-offs in exchange for duties ignored and overlooked.

When we left the airport, we were surrounded by a mass of people holding up signs. One young man's sign read, "Welcome, Graham Kennedy." We had arrived home. We were welcomed with garlands by the bishop's assistant and driver.

At 7 a.m., Ahmedabad's streets were busy. Scooters, motorcycles, bicycles, camel-pulled carts, buses and soldiers — all skirmished for driving space on the four-lane airport arterial that soon became a regular city street. We tried to take it all in — buildings, trees, summer weather, crowds of people, animals such as goats and sheep and cows, and the 1954 Morris Oxfords (the bishop's car, brand-new and still mass-produced in India as the national car) — all signs of a continent of people on the go, and with a sense of direction and destiny.

Eight kilometres later, I knew by instinct we were close to the compound where I had lived as a child. We had crossed the Sabarmati River which, in January, was more like a creek. It was especially low because of severe drought. Then, there was Gujarat College, and our compound would be across the street, on the right, behind the red-brick wall.

after 45 years!

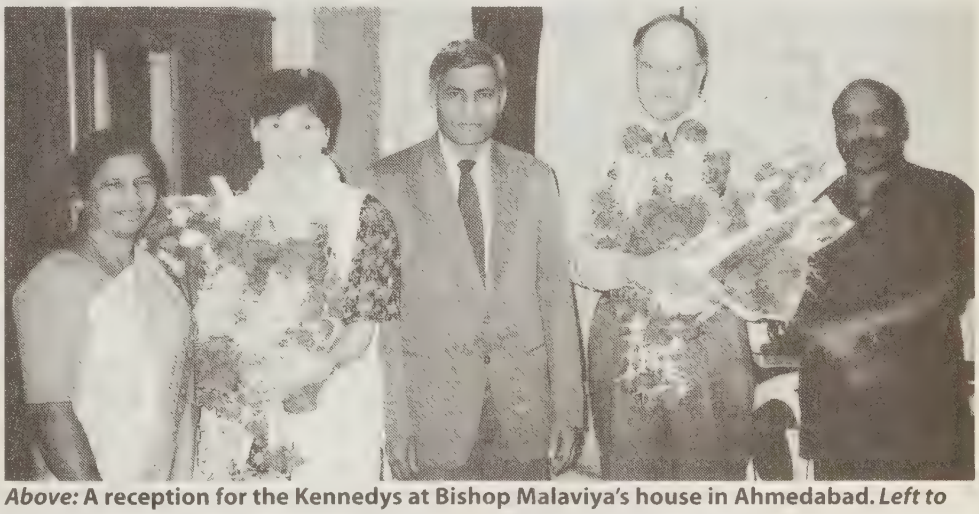
I looked at it all in awe. Before us were three brick bungalows. The middle (yellow) one had been ours, while the red one on the left was the Brown/Young bungalow, and the one on the right was reserved for the single women missionaries. All that was a long time ago; the Indian government had "expelled" missionaries in the early 1970s. The Bishop of Gujarat now lived in the women's bungalow. On the left side was the diocesan guest-house where we would be staying. Our former yellow bungalow was now a meeting place for diocesan committees, with office space for the Trust that maintained all the former mission properties. Around these bungalows, the Indian community still resided in their familiar dwellings.

In the 1950s, John Sumpchand was our cook. I remember him and his family: four children, all older than I. Today, John's 59-year-old son John, his wife and their two sons in their 30s live in the same dwelling as his father did long ago. Descendants of the same families inhabit other homes on the compound. A 60-year-old woman told me she remembered my brother and me. I was able to ask about people who used to live there, particularly Katie, a mentally challenged girl we all cared about. Her condition was incurable, but she was always thought of as one of us.

A retired minister living on the compound invited us to supper. We were reminded of Indian family tradition: the older generation (grandparents) lives with and is cared for by the children and grandchildren. Each dwelling now has an indoor tap (cold water) and toilet. Today, the floors are made of concrete and the roofing is still metal, covered with a clay shingle. The former missionary bungalows have not been upgraded in any way, still featuring the best technology of the 1950s in hydro and plumbing: a two-litre hot water tank in the bathroom and a cold water drip shower! There are no automatic washers as laundry is still done outdoors, *dhobi* style, with a tap running cold water on a concrete slab and a woman trying not to break the buttons.

Bishop Malaviya and the clergy of Ahmedabad each loaded us down with garlands — a warm reception. The older clergy proudly remembered my father's time in India, telling us stories I had never heard about his military manner and style and his meticulous insistence on absolute perfection in building methods and materials. On one occasion of arch construction, he demanded the work be redone seven times.

The good bishop had a daily schedule for us. We were to visit area churches (giving a message and greeting in each locale), preach in my "home" congregation and attend a festival for us in the village of Ranipur where my father had built the new church sanctuary. We began



Above: **A reception for the Kennedys at Bishop Malaviya's house in Ahmedabad.** ***Left to right:*** **Fuhneria Malaviya, Catherine Kennedy, Bishop Malaviya, Graham Kennedy and Prokosh Singada, clerk of presbytery.** ***Previous page:*** **Dancing girls welcome the Kennedys to the church in Ranipur, India.**

There were also the monkey stories. Was I not the child carried off by a monkey? Years ago, my parents had told me the story of a monkey that absconded with one of the missionary babies, and of how the mother's cries had scared the monkey into dropping the child and scampering away. Had my parents conveniently altered the story so that I was not the victim of the monkey's maternal instinct? The other story was of the missionary who shot a monkey that was raiding his tomato plants. He was a poor shot and inadvertently killed the monkey. Suddenly, a host of people came from the streets: an animal had been killed in a land where all life is sacred, and one cannot even kill a mosquito. It was not a good day for the mission. The dead monkey's mate cried in the tree overhead for hours, even after we had buried it behind our bungalow. The tree where all this occurred is still standing, and I noted it with regard.

at Prantij, where my brother had been run over by a lawn roller and where my parents had begun language instruction (learning Gujarati after arriving in India in 1945). Prantij was typical of the pattern of missionary endeavour: to "plant" Christianity, one established an evangelistic mission (a church), built a school with housing (hostel) and, if possible, a hospital, college or school of higher learning. Since 1970, the Prantij school and hostel had been sold to the government, but the smaller mission now takes in recovered lepers who are unwelcome

in their own villages (mostly women with scarred hands and faces, and confronted by doubt at home as to the full extent of their recovery) and children whose parents have leprosy and are unable to care for them for fear of passing on the disease. These children are housed at the mission and enrolled in the municipal school nearby.

The Sabarmati congregation was waiting for us to visit on our way home from Prantij, but our driver got lost in Maninagar. There (by plan), we were royally hosted by Julius and Anita Christian, minister and wife to a 2,000-member congregation. As it was late, the bishop advised us by phone to go on home, but the Sabarmatis had continued to wait for us for hours with refreshments. So we were whisked out of home base to appear for the welcome and reception at Sabarmati Church: garlands, prayer, Bible reading, greetings and a short meditation. When Cathy was asked to speak, she did so well the women (and, later, the clergy) began asking her to speak at every stop. We became a two-person team of emissaries.



At the Jobat Hospital, *left to right*: Stephen Abey, accountant, sponsored as a child at the Abey orphanage by St. Stephen's, Ottawa; Pauline Brown, missionary nurse, International Ministries; Mercy Rovikant, head of the village health care program sponsored by PWS&D; Mrs. Sadid, nurse and village community health worker.

On Sunday, January 21, I preached at my home congregation in downtown Ahmedabad, at Raikhad, the original Presbyterian church built well over 100 years ago. My father had been in charge of making an addition to the building in 1952, extending the length of the building by seven metres while keeping the appearance intact. People remembered him and the work project after all these years.

Beginning with a disappointing 40 people, the church was full within 90 minutes. People sat on the floor and huddled in the doorways. The service went on for 2 1/2 hours. And, as requested for this historic occasion, I baptized Jimmy in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. After the service, I took a drama presentation to the church school, with children acting out the roles. Even with a translator, the children loved it, as they do in St. Catharines, Ontario, on Sunday mornings. That afternoon, the same drama was acted out at Raikhad's extension Sunday school in Canpur, a one-room house in suburban Ahmedabad.

The visit to Anand and Borsad brought back fond and sad memories. Anand was where I was born and where my youngest brother died of diphtheria. Church leaders took us quietly to the little cemetery behind the church, and showed me the unmarked place where missionary children were buried. India sometimes elicited a great price from those who chose to go and live there. The Anand hospital is now closed, but there is a movement to convert it into a seniors residence. The church schools are still open and bustling with hundreds of children.

Borsad mission station continues to present a graphic picture of the whole Christian effort and witness in India. Beside a Hindu temple resplendent with gold trim and marble columns stands the Borsad church made of simple red brick and seating about 200. Nearby are elementary and high schools, a teachers training college and the hospital. That is the shape of the twin realities of Hinduism and Christianity, and it's not difficult to see that Christianity continues to win converts as it widens its base in the community. In response, Hinduism has begun to build schools and hostels of its own, teaching education and Hinduism to children, even as the Christian community has done for over 200 years.

The highlight of our stay was the visit to the Christian village of Ranipur. There, the entire populace turned out to dance, sing and welcome us (even with firecrackers!) to the worship service and reception. No one famous or foreign had visited Ranipur before. The village had been relocated by Ahmedabad Hydro in the 1950s to make way for a power station. The people were removed from farmland that had sustained them for centuries and were given land on which nothing had ever grown, together with a cash settlement. The village has been in the labour business for the past half-century and, now, has discovered its wells are polluted by waste from nearby chemical factories. Though a new 183-metre well is needed to access clean water, no one is willing to pay for the project. I remember drinking the best tea in the world (probably richly laden with sugar) in Ranipur. People told they remembered me drinking tea while my father was up on a scaffold supervising the construction of the new Ranipur church.

When we were to leave Ahmedabad, Bishop Malaviya invited us to his home at 7 a.m. to join his diocesan clergy who, by now, thought of us as their own. The occasion was the visit of six American church leaders representing the Brethren stake in the Church of North India (CNI). Their threat of secession from the 1970 union included the intention of taking their historical church property with them out of the CNI. The Americans expected the sea of Indian faces around the room but were startled to see the two of us. My instinct was that the bishop knew what he was doing, so we didn't help to sort out the confusion in our introduction to the larger group. I simply explained we lived on the Canadian side of the Niagara River where United States citizens go for a good look

at Niagara Falls. The Brethren were on their best behaviour, and we heard no more talk of secession. But it wasn't the visitors who were threatening to leave; it was pressure from the constituency in the United States who had neither been to India nor understood the CNI.

We went on to the Canadian Presbyterian mission in Jobat, where Pauline Brown is stationed, and, then, to Amkut, where the Doctors Buchanan had gone in the 1890s to establish a Presbyterian Christian presence among the Bhil (jungle) people. It was at breakfast on Friday morning when we felt the seats tremble under us, together with cutlery and everything else on the table. Word came later about the earthquake and the horrendous loss of life in Bhuj, extending easterly from Kutch into the Ahmedabad area. We saw ghastly colour pictures of devastation, loss and suffering. We prayed for people, homes and families living in high-rise buildings in the city where only hours before we had been received with such warmth, graciousness and respect.

What did we think of India and its people? It is a vast land, 3,200 kilometres wide by 4,000 kilometres north to south. It has the highest mountains in the world, and almost as much prairie and desert as either Africa or Canada. Tropical jungles still protect tigers, lions and elephants, while monkeys abound wherever there is sufficient vegetation. Drought in the west threatens farmlands and life itself by starvation, while flooding in the east ruins agriculture and imperils existence. The Indian people are lovely and lovable. They were always kind, generous and warm to us.

Indian clergy earn three per cent of what we do here in Canada, and I was at a loss to try to explain it to one of them, whether as a question of justice, equality, fairness or even common sense. Our heating bill in St. Catharines would be equal to a clergyperson's annual pay, while my house taxes would fund three of my counterparts' salaries in Ahmedabad. No clergy in the city owns a car (not even in Maninagar with the 2,000-member church).

Rickshaws are the preferred means of travel in the city (the equivalent of our subway ride), a motorized taxi that holds three skinny people and costs about 12 cents per kilometre for the ride. One hundred Canadian dollars buys 2,950 rupees (33 rupees to the Canadian dollar), just short of a month's pay for someone with a university degree. I bought a pair of Bata *chumpells* (sandals) for 300 rupees (less than $10).

Knowledge of English is a great asset in India to get any job with international connections and, especially, for access to the computer world where software development outdistances our efforts in the West by the weight of the numbers of people working at it in India. Indian pharmaceutical companies have developed their own version of Viagra (and many other drugs) for about one-tenth the cost we have to pay in Canada.

We felt privileged to meet Christians who have suffered discrimination and persecution in the past year in Gujarat: 700 active acts of violence, intimidation and harassment have been documented in 2000, including attacks on 50 Christian churches. At the Ahmedabad Utility Company (power and light), employees who are Christians were released, relocated outside the city, or offered menial positions in place of skilled work they held by virtue of their considerable education, training and experience.

Hinduism in its extreme form (nationalists with little to no respect for other religions) recognizes Christianity is chipping away at its base in both rural and metropolitan India. Parents line up to send their children to Christian schools like the one at Ahmedabad: 2,000 elementary children attend every morning and 2,000 high school students in the afternoon. Thirty per cent are Hindu and 10 per cent are Muslim. The 88 children in each classroom are smiling, happy and excited in their blue uniforms. One teacher does evangelistic work on weekends in the Kutch peninsula where the earthquake did its worst damage. Reaction to Christian success stories and church growth sometimes expresses itself in violence and abuse in Gujarat, but the question often raised is, "Why would we want to persecute the people who build schools and hospitals in our country when nobody else can, or will, or wants to?"

India needs a lot of economic help. The Germans are building an expressway (toll-road) in Gujarat beside the tradi-

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Presbyterian quiz

1. The founder of Presbyterianism was
(a) John Knox
(b) John Calvin
(c) John Hus

2. He was
(a) Scottish
(b) Swiss
(c) French

3. He was
(a) a clergyman
(b) an accountant
(c) a lawyer

4. His greatest gift to the church was
(a) a great many children
(b) several new hymns
(c) a book

5. He spent most of his adult life in
(a) Edinburgh
(b) Geneva
(c) Paris

See page 47 for the answers.

Pulpit

The afternoon falls red across the flesh
thin pages, hidden behind a pillar of wood.
This is an ordinary day, hexed
by debts and other parables of the word.
No one launches the meaning of a text
down from this last tower in the house of God.
The holy trenches kneel before the unheard.

— Charles Cooper

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tional Indian roads. But highway travel in the country might average 50 kilometres per hour because one has to share the road with people, camels, elephants, scooters, buses, lorries and rickshaws. Besides, the roads can change rapidly from multilanes to one lane, to half a lane and, then, to gravel, a footpath and, finally, to make your own way. Buses can block at least half the road, but trucks are usually restricted to night-time travel.

On our return from Borsad, the driver (a young, steely eyed Muslim youth) passed some 300 buses and trucks, staring down oncoming traffic so that it left the road to let us pass. I've never seen more precise and determined driving; at times, it was safer to close one's eyes than to watch! In India, the car horn is used as often as the brakes!

Along with the drought situation, the earthquake creates a critical situation for all people of Gujarat. We in the West must respond. On a regular basis, we can be a great help to the youth of India by supplying educational funds for books, uniforms, meals and scholarships, as well as access to Canadian schools and universities. Companies based in Canada advertise in Indian newspapers, openly displaying the Canadian flag and making promises to bring young people into Canada or the United States as immigrants and students for the low price of $10,000 (US). Some families save for years to give their children such an opportunity when they could achieve the same result by applying directly to the Canadian consulate at New Delhi, and to Canadian offices in other major Indian centres.

Christianity needs to be more unified in India as it confronts Islam and Hinduism in an ongoing struggle for the hearts and minds of the Indian people. In New Delhi, the Church of North India offices stand proudly at one end of Pundit Pant Marg; at the other end of the street is the equally impressive Catholic Conference of Bishops office. (Around the square is the magnificent Sikh temple.) Comprising some two per cent of the population, Christians need to stand united in order to present the full measure of the gospel of Jesus Christ to India. R

Graham Kennedy is the minister of Knox Church in St. Catharines, Ont.

She still needs to be loved

by Barb Alston

A team ministry at Melita Church in Manitoba

From the time six years ago when we brought her home in the truck, my husband, Tom, and I have enjoyed every day she has been a part of our lives. She has attended session meetings, Ladies Aid meetings, a worship service and she has made pastoral visits.

Her name is Susie. Susie is a dog, a six-year-old Australian shepherd who has become a vital part of the ministry at Melita Church in the southwestern corner of Manitoba.

The story starts when Susie was eight weeks old. A woman in our congregation had recently moved into the Personal Care Home in Melita, a place I routinely visit. Like many others, Winnifred had to give up her home and her beloved cat and dog. I assumed she would enjoy seeing our new little pup.

At the time, Susie was a little brown bundle of fur. Not having taken animals on my visits before, I ventured in alone first. Winnifred sat in her chair, hunched over. I asked her how she was.

"Oh, all right," she replied.

A nurse encouraged me to bring Susie in. The dog's presence transformed Winnifred instantly.

"Oh-oh-oh-oh, can I hold her? Can I hold her?" she exclaimed, her hands reaching out. She sat straight in her chair with a gleam in her eye.

She held the little pup and said something I will never forget: "She just needs to be loved."

This visit marked the beginning of many wonderful visits. Several years later, I visited Winnifred with Susie, now a grown-up, somewhat calmer dog. I spoke to her of the day she had hugged



Doris always found her day a little brighter whenever Susie came along.

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Vern and Suzie share a moment with each other.

the small brown pup and told me how she needed to be loved. She looked directly at me and spoke sharply, "Well, she *still* needs to be loved!"

Now, if I ever visit the home without Susie, I am greeted not with "How are you?" or "Nice to see you" but with "Where is your dog?"

Over the years, Susie and I have met many special people. Terry, for example, is a relatively young man confined to a wheelchair. He cannot speak. But when he saw Susie, he squealed with delight. Susie put her paws up on the wheelchair and gave him wet "doggie kisses." When Terry was a little boy, his mother later told me, he had a dog that "would have done anything for him."

Susie has had several litters of pups. On occasion, I have visited with some of Susie's pups. A nurse suggested I take one pup to see Helen. I hadn't thought of it before — Helen cannot see.

Helen took the pup and carefully petted his fur from head to tail. "Oh, thank you for bringing him," she said.

Because of my visits with Susie, I have been the privileged listener to many stories about favourite dogs, from cattle-dogs that used to ride on horseback to the story told with tearful eyes about a beautiful, large, dignified German shepherd that had to be put down. I am known as "the minister with the dog." What a special gift and privilege that is.

People in residential care homes or lodges are mourning the loss of homes, independence and, often, their pets. Scratching a dog's ear, shaking its paw, having a dog lie in the middle of the floor — these simple acts give back to people, for a moment, something they have lost.

I tell this story because a whole world of caring and sharing has opened up to me through ministering alongside one of God's creatures — a world of unconditional love, joy, companionship, memories, making connections. After all, "we all *still* need to be loved." And everyone needs a friend, even if only for a few minutes. R

Barb Alston is minister of Melita Church, Melita, Man. Barb and her husband, Tom, live on a farm and have a small cow-calf operation near Hartney, Man.

Letter from Malawi

Heather Jones

The first sounds of disturbance came at 5 a.m. It was the din of a crowd and, above it, the distinct plea, "Get an ambulance!" I lay in bed wondering what had happened and if anyone had sent for help. By the time I got out of bed, things seemed to have quieted.

But now, as I write, I am listening to the sound of tear-gas being fired — enough tear-gas to sink the proverbial battleship. Later, as I walked (quickly!) from the synod office to my home, there was a faint smell in the air that reminded me of my high school chemistry lab.

The different shots being fired confuse me. Some sound as if they come from a large gun, while others have the sharper, smaller crack of a handgun. I am no expert in weaponry, and this is the first time I have found myself hiding from civil unrest. I only know there is a lot of shooting going on, and it frightens me.

The gunfire is sounding closer. Some people are running through the synod grounds. So now I've locked my doors and I'm even more nervous. What is the antidote for tear-gas? I think I'm supposed to put a wet cloth over my face if the fumes penetrate my house. A part of me thinks I should be opening my door and offering sanctuary, or going out into the street to help the injured. But another part of me — the sensible (or cowardly) part — says stay put and out of the way. As I look out my window, I can see people walking cautiously toward the street. Are they unaware of the dangers? Or am I over-reacting?

The trouble has been brewing for months, ever since the city evicted the vendors from the market area so it could be "cleaned up." Money has been donated by the German government to "improve" the city, and the market area has been designated a priority. The vendors were told to move to a swampy site near the airport, with the assurance they would be able to return to the market area before the rainy season. Well, the rainy season came six months ago and the market is still under construction.

When the swampy site became uninhabitable, the vendors moved their stalls to the edges of the market area. The city then issued a public letter stating the German government was threatening to withdraw its funding because the vendors were inconveniencing the construction workers.

My reaction was, let them take their money and go. I'm not sure what "beautification" details they are still working on, but the vendors have suffered enough. They are simply ordinary folk working extremely hard to eke out a living in a desperately poor country. They live on the edge, economically, and they are being pushed over the edge, psychologically.

I sit here in my relatively safe house and pray for peace in the city and safety for the vendors. I pray for mercy in the hearts of the police and the soldiers who, I suspect, have been over-reacting out of fear and inexperience.

For the most part, Malawi has been a miraculously peaceful country, and Mzuzu is a small city in a rural area. I expect no one was prepared for this kind of situation. The rich city officials in their nice suits and well-appointed offices are totally unaware of the vendors' daily struggles to earn enough money to buy food for their families. The vendors, and those who have joined them in the protest, are too close to their anger and frustration to realize that violence will not solve the problem.

I continue to sit in my house, the doors locked, praying that calm heads will somehow come to prevail, that the problem will be solved justly and peacefully, without bloodshed or loss of life.

Lord, in your mercy, hear my prayer.

Heather Jones is a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada serving with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Mzuzu, Malawi.

Youth in Mission in Eastern Europe

From July 6 to August 12, four young adult Presbyterians worked with children and youth in small villages in Romania, Hungary and Croatia. Working closely with Brian Johnston, whose work in Romania is funded through *Presbyterians Sharing...*, the Canadian volunteers led children and youth in activities such as English language training, music, drama, sports and vacation Bible school.

Increasing urbanization in Hungary and Romania, combined with the disintegration of villages, has had a harsh impact on education, health care, recreation and general living conditions. Youth in Mission, together with the Ars Longa Foundation, works to advance the goal of developing Christian community-building programs for children and youth.



While in Romania, the Youth in Mission participants presented a banner to the Kokos Templon [church] in Cluj. From left to right, are: Cecelia McMorrow, Katie Dickieson, James Humphrey, Steve Ross, mission volunteer Sonya Henderson, Rev. Sogor Géza and Brian Johnston.

Tyndale-St. George's hosts community event

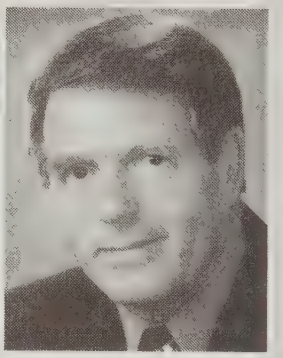
An estimated 800 children, parents, families and neighbours of the Little Burgundy district of Montreal attended a barbecue hosted by Tyndale-St. George's Community Centre. The barbecue was held for three reasons: to celebrate the graduation of students in the Tyndale-St. George's programs, to acknowledge the International Year of Volunteers and thank the 300 volunteers who support the work of Tyndale-St. George's, and to raise money for a video camera and furniture for classrooms. The event included free hotdogs, music, face-painting, entertainment, a bake sale, treats and prizes.

Tyndale-St. George's Community Centre is a partnership ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada. It serves a predominantly low-income, multicultural community and is widely considered to be the leading community organization in Montreal in terms of serving a diversified immigrant and visible minority population. The centre runs four major programs — for infants, children, youth, and parents and adults — aimed at helping individuals and families to live lives of greater self-reliance. Programs are guided by Christian principles while focusing on improving literacy, promoting academic success, preventing substance abuse and enhancing communication skills. More than 2,000 people representing about 100 nationalities participate in the programs on an ongoing basis.



In high demand for her many talents, Betty Ann Infilise is also a member of the Fund-raising Committee of Tyndale St-Georges in Montreal.

Presbyterian appointed director with Canadian Food for the Hungry International



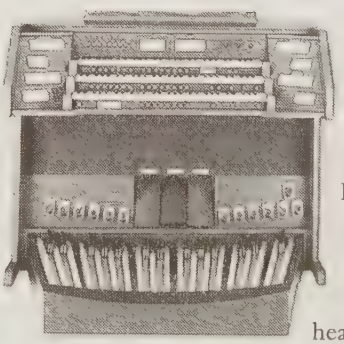
The board of directors of Canadian Food for the Hungry International (CFHI) has announced the appointment of Gary Pluim as director for Ontario and Eastern Canada. Pluim, a member of Doon Church, Kitchener, Ontario, who has served on various church committees at the local and national levels, was previously national manager of gift planning for World Vision. His primary responsibility with CFHI will be to increase its presence in Ontario and Eastern Canada by developing a multi-year expansion program, opening new offices, recruiting and training management personnel and developing donor relation programs. CFHI is a non-profit, Christian organization that exists to end hunger world-wide.

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Blantyre Synod ordains first woman minister

On Sunday, August 12, in the historic St. Michael and All Angels Church, Blantyre, Malawi, Edna Navaya was ordained as a minister of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). Navaya becomes the first woman to be ordained by Blantyre Synod and joins Rev. Martha Mwale, ordained earlier this year by Livingstonia Synod. (Two men were also ordained but had to take a back seat on this historic occasion.)

In Blantyre Synod, when an ordination is completed, it is the custom that members of the congregation come forward with their offerings — money, presents, Bible verses, songs. There was a wonderful response from the whole congregation, especially from the Mvano (guild representatives from all 13 presbyteries) who came forward dancing and singing.

Despite this historic breakthrough, it seems the two women ministers will have few colleagues in the near future. The theological college still has more than 90 per cent male enrolment. However, the gates are now open, and the CCAP Blantyre Synod has finally recognized the gifts the Spirit bestows on all God's people. (*Glenn Inglis, Malawi*)

Church of North India steps up AIDS education

One of India's largest Protestant churches is stepping up its AIDS education work in the face of a growing threat to the country from HIV/AIDS.

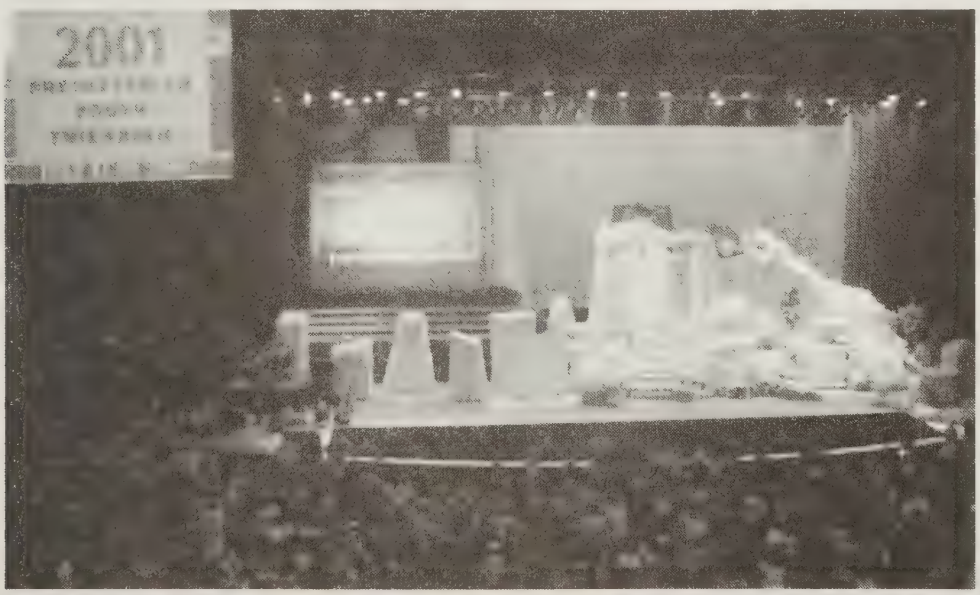
"With AIDS becoming one of the biggest health hazards for the nation, we are extending our HIV awareness campaign to all the dioceses," said Karuna Roy, who co-ordinates the work on HIV/AIDS for the Church of North India (CNI).

Of 34.3 million people in the world living with HIV/AIDS, more than 10 per cent (3.7 million) live in India, according to recent United Nations figures.

CNI is targeting students and young people with its campaign and has, so far, trained 3,000 students between the ages of 15 and 18 in New Delhi to become "AIDS teen peer educators." Now, the church is expanding its plan to include all of its 26 dioceses which, together, cover two-thirds of India.

The Church of North India, inaugurated in 1970 as a union of seven Protestant denominations, is a partner church of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. (*ENI*)

Triennium takes centre stage for Presbyterian youth



Six hundred and fifty Canadian Presbyterian young people and 50 leaders joined more than 6,000 other participants at the 2001 Presbyterian Youth Triennium, held at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, July 24-29. Young people from around the world came together for a week of youthful worship and song ("God will, God will, rock you!"), meditation and discussion.

news scan

Gerald Vandezande to receive Order of Canada

Gerald Vandezande, a founding member of Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), has been awarded the Order of Canada. Vandezande served as executive director and, later, national public affairs director of CPJ for 35 years until his retirement in 1998. Founded predominantly by Dutch immigrants of the Reformed faith, CPJ is a national, non-partisan organization that promotes justice in Canadian public affairs. CPJ responds to God's call for love, justice and stewardship by engaging in policy research, citizen education and political advocacy on poverty issues, refugee concerns and aboriginal rights.

And no annoying perfume samples in church bulletins

Attending worship where incense is used or where worshippers use liberal amounts of perfumed scents can make liturgy "life-threatening" for parishioners who suffer from lung problems, according to Canadian campaigners for "scent-free" zones in churches. One in five Canadians suffers from a lung problem, according to Canada's Lung Association. Many CLA provincial branches offer advice to churches wishing to become scent-free. (*ENI*)

Russia's president seeks inspiration from country's Christian roots

Ten years after the coup attempt that triggered the end of Soviet communism, Russia's president said his country needs to seek inspiration from its Christian roots.

"Without Christianity, without the Orthodox faith and culture which sprang from it, Russia would have hardly existed as a state," said President Vladimir Putin during a visit to the Solovetsky monastery on the Solovki Islands, part of Russia's northern White Sea archipelago. He was accompanied to the monastery by Patriarch Alexei II, leader of the Russian Orthodox Church.

"Today, now that we are rediscovering ourselves, it is very important, useful and timely to return to these sources in our search for the moral foundations of our life," Putin told reporters on August 20.

In what observers have described as a carefully timed vacation, the president has been visiting Orthodox churches and monasteries in northern Russia as his country marks the 10th anniversary of the attempted coup against the then Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, on August 19, 1991. The coup, although unsuccessful, started a chain of events that led to Gorbachev's downfall, the break-up of the Soviet Union, and the rise of Boris Yeltsin as president of an independent Russian Federation. *(ENI)*

International Ministry Exchange meets in London

A meeting of the international advisers to International Ministry Exchanges (IME) and members of the board of directors of the Clergy Exchange International Foundation took place at Trinity United Reformed Church in Wimbledon, London, England. Present were representatives from the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church of Actearoa New Zealand, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Church of Canada, the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom and the Uniting Church in Australia. Rev. Shaun Seaman, minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Kanata, Ontario, also attended the meetings.

IME seeks to encourage and provide safeguards for exchanges between professional church workers and congregations from various countries. Currently, IME has 247 ministers in its database. A pilot program has recently been initiated involving exchanges with churches in Third World countries. More information about IME can be obtained from its Web site: www.ministry-exchanges.org.



Shaun and Heather Seaman (foreground, right) of Kanata, Ontario, join Anne and Rev. Barry Grey (foreground, left), founders of Clergy Exchange International, and other members of the delegation for dinner at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Restaurant in London, England.

Beardy resigns as Keewatin bishop

Gordon Beardy's resignation in August as bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada diocese of Keewatin has shocked many indigenous and non-indigenous Anglicans who viewed Bishop Beardy as a rising light in the church. According to the *Anglican Journal*, Beardy, an Oji-Cree, was viewed as "a bishop equally comfortable with natives and whites, with a humorous, self-deprecating style combined with profound wisdom and a declared passion for healing and reconciliation among natives and whites."

Only two weeks before announcing his resignation, Beardy moved the denomination's General Synod to tears with a historic and emotional acceptance of Archbishop Michael Peers's 1993 apology to the church's native people for abuse they suffered in residential schools. Beardy attended a residential school (Presbyterian) for a year before begging his parents not to send him back.

The diocese of Keewatin covers 482,790 square kilometres and stretches over parts of northwestern Ontario and eastern Manitoba. *(From a report by Jane Davidson, Anglican Journal)*

briefly noted

Mission staff arrivals and departures
Arrivals: *Sherien Barsoum*, from Cyprus, mid-August; *Sonya Henderson*, from Romania, Aug. 20; *Cath Lam*, from Taiwan, August (date undetermined).
Departures: *Lillian Sparling*, for Malawi, Sept. 6.

Church offices staff arrivals and departures:
Arrivals: *Nicole DeSilva*, as clerk, Pensions and Benefits; *Judith Marnoch*, as switchboard/receptionist.
Departures: *Wendy Penwarden*, from The Book Room for new challenges; *Paulette Jeffrey*, switchboard/receptionist for (sigh!) Hamilton, Bermuda, to join her husband, Rev. Duncan Jeffrey, minister of St. Andrew's Church.

Contributing editors' fathers who have won awards: *Dr. Thomas (Tupper) Cawsey*, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont., father of *Record* contributing editor Kathy Cawsey and co-winner from Ontario region of the 2000-2001 Leaders in Management Education Awards recognizing outstanding professors at schools of management.

Life in the cracks

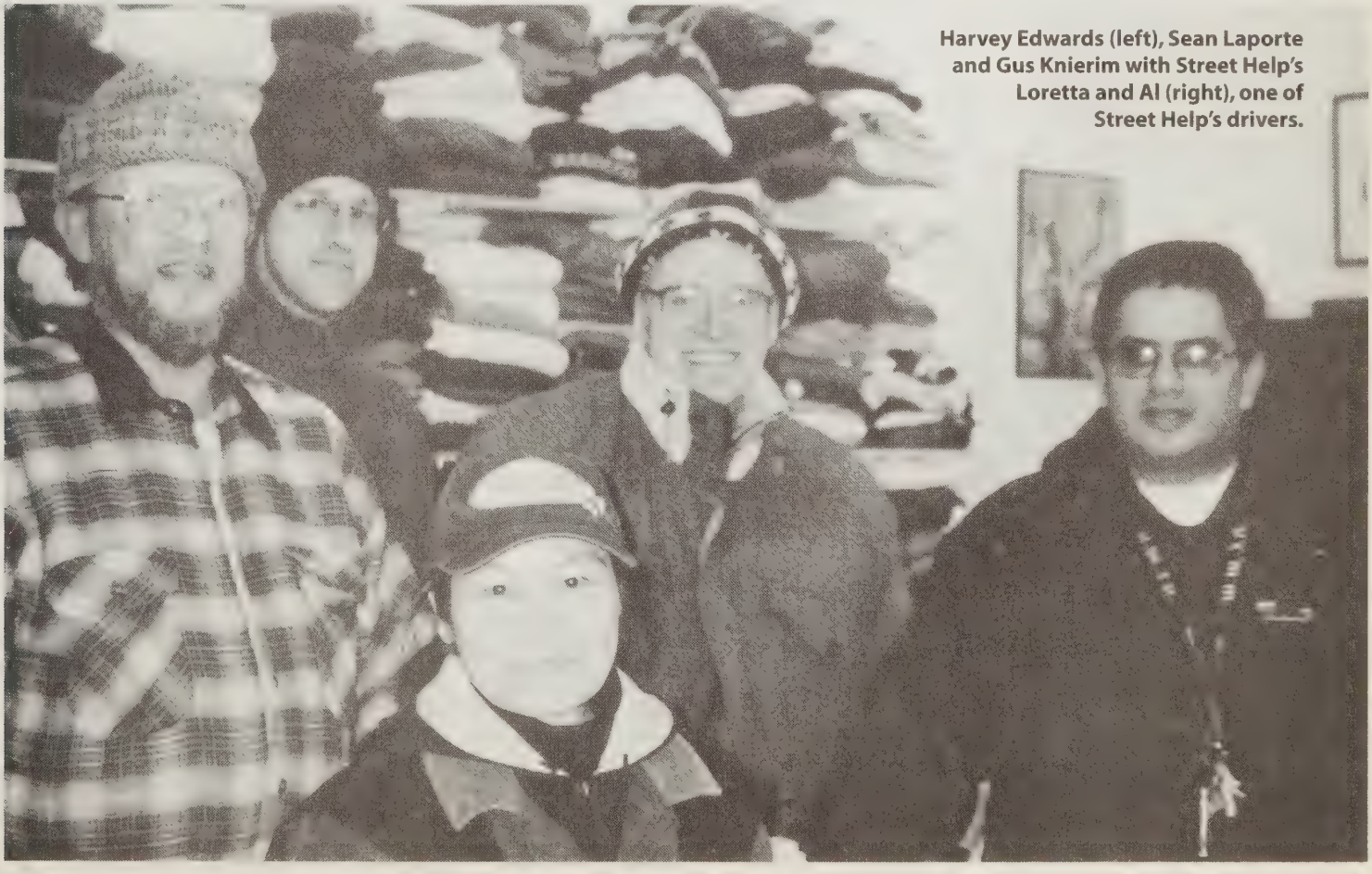
Homeless people are not abusers of the system but victims of it

It was during the extensive media coverage given to the tainted water tragedy in Walkerton, Ontario, that Harvey Edwards' thoughts were drawn to a tragedy of another kind. Although he and much of the country had, with good cause, been focused on Walkerton and the agony of its citizens, Harvey was also aware that more than a dozen homeless people die from exposure in Toronto each year — without any significant media coverage and with comparatively little sympathy. He wanted to help.

After contacting the Metropolitan Toronto Police, Harvey was directed to Street Help, a program operated by Na-Me-Res, a native men's residence. As well as a soup kitchen and a clothing and food store, the program runs a street patrol seven nights a week, 365 days a year. Harvey next got in touch with Gus Knierim, like himself, an elder at St. Paul's Church, Thornbury, Ontario, and someone who shared his deep concern for the plight of the homeless. Together, they decided to advertise within their congregation and community for gifts of clothing and money. The result: a donated Tilden rental van filled with hundreds of items of clothing (from boxers to boots), sleeping bags, blankets, bottles of juice, chocolate bars and 525 assorted sandwiches made by the women of St. Paul's.

With Harvey and his wife, Audrey, on board, the van headed for Toronto, while Gus and Sean Laporte followed in Gus's car. At Street Help's headquarters, some of the donations they brought were added to about 36 litres each of soup and hot chocolate and loaded into Street Help's two vans (donated by the Rotary Club and B'nai Brith).

Sometimes, doing outreach work can be a spiritual experience. For Harvey and the others, this was the case before their



Harvey Edwards (left), Sean Laporte and Gus Knierim with Street Help's Loretta and Al (right), one of Street Help's drivers.

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evening's work began. While they were still in the clothing and food bank room, an aboriginal woman took a large clamshell and some shavings from her purse. She rolled the shavings (which turned out to be sage) into a ball, placed it on the shell and lit it. Then, wafting the smoke toward her face, she whispered a prayer. When asked, she explained the smoke purified her eyes to see more clearly, her ears to listen more closely and her mouth to speak with knowledge and love. The team from St. Paul's followed her example, praying to God for the same blessings.

Loretta turned out to be a sage woman in more than one way. She is a social worker who knows not only the people who have fallen through the cracks but also the cracks in which they live. As Street Help's vans drove around the city on a frigid –15 C night, figures emerged from the shadows of office buildings, abandoned grain elevators, viaducts, makeshift shelters and even an apartment with cupboards that were truly bare. The people were given food, clothing and sleeping bags — whatever they needed. They were both young and old. Some were down on their luck, others simply down. All were grateful for the help.

For the volunteers from St. Paul's, that cold winter evening proved to be a heart-warming experience. The people they met were not the stereotypical shiftless welfare recipients abusing the system. For the most part, they were victims — victims of higher rents and cuts in unemployment and welfare benefits.

Any anxieties the volunteers may have felt as the evening began were dispelled by the time it ended. Dispelled by people like the tough-looking man who lingered while his equally tough-looking friends moved on. He headed straight for Harvey, put his arm around his shoulder, looked him in the eyes and said, "God bless you, brother." (*Based on a report by Harvey Edwards*) R

The congregation of St. Paul's, Thornbury, Ont., continues to help homeless people by collecting large tins of soup and delivering them to Street Help on a monthly basis. Anyone wishing to participate can call Harvey and Audrey Edwards at 519-599-5226 or Gus Knierim at 519-599-6975.

Kathy Cawsey



Looking back

An antidote for past atrocities committed by the church

A millennium year is a good time to look back on the previous millennium. A time to assess where we have been and where we are now. To consider what we have accomplished and where we have failed. To evaluate how the Presbyterian Church, as a historical community, has done in fulfilling Jesus' commandments to love God and to love one another.

In terms of church history, the past millennium opened with the First Crusade and the split between the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches. It closed with religious and ethnic warfare in the Balkans and the Middle East, and the still-present shadow of the Jewish Holocaust. In between are a thousand years of conflict, schism, religious persecution and church-sanctioned killing. And in case some among us try to dismiss those events as the actions of the Roman Catholic Church, or the Anglican Church, or whatever, take a look at the entry beside 1553: the founding father of Presbyterianism.

It is easy to say those were other times and other people. It is easy to say we don't believe those things anymore. We no longer believe it is acceptable to kill, torture and conquer for our religion; our values, at least among the majority in the West, have changed.

But the whole point of a corporation, or a community, is that there is historical continuity tying it together. No matter how far removed we may be from our predecessors, or how much we might disagree with their actions, just as a corporation must pay reparations for the crimes of its previous board or management team, so, too, do we bear some responsibility for the deeds of our forebears.

More important, I think, people in the church today do not realize the rest of the world may not understand or believe that we hold fundamentally different values from those some Christians may have held five centuries ago, at least when it comes to tolerance and respect for other faith systems. We do not see ourselves as the same kind of people who fought the Crusades or the wars of religion, or who participated in the imperialist expansion of Christianity. Even if we acknowledge some ancestry or inheritance, we would not condone their actions today. And, yet, they were called Christians, and we are called Christians. They were Presbyterians or Calvinists, and we are Presbyterians or Calvinists. How is an outsider to see the difference?

If there is anything the church should do in response to the events of the past millennium, it should be to denounce openly the actions with which we no longer agree and which we now believe were misinterpretations of God's Word. It is not enough to brush those events under the carpet or to acknowledge quietly to ourselves that we have changed. We must openly, continually and specifically declare our disapproval of the horrors done in the past in the name of Christianity.

We should not do this in a spirit of disavowal of responsibility or of distancing from the historical church, however. As Christians, we declare we are part of one Body of Christ and, thus, we must bear responsibility for all the actions of that body. At the same time, we must do so in a spirit of humility, admitting and condemning our mistakes — no matter how much embarrassment or bruises we sustain to our collective pride. This public denunciation of deeds done historically in the name of Christianity will be ineffectual and empty, however, unless we change not only our beliefs but also our attitudes to those beliefs.

If there is anything the church should do in response to the events of the past millennium, it should be to denounce openly the actions with which we no longer agree and which we now believe were misinterpretations of God's Word

To outsiders, no matter how much we declare our historical and doctrinal distance from the Christians of half a millennium ago, such an assertion will always be doubtful. Especially with the prevalence of vocal elements of right-wing Christianity still advocating positions perilously close to the intolerant, self-righteous, militant attitude that has dominated much of Christianity's history. It is difficult for non-Christians or borderline Christians to see what, if anything, has changed at all. To counteract the attitudes

of these individuals and groups, more moderate churches must not only be as vocal as they are and openly condemn past misdeeds, we must ensure our attitude is also visibly different.

The problem with all the horrific events I have listed from the past millennium (admittedly selectively) is that, *in every case, the individuals involved believed they were correct.* They were so certain of themselves, they were willing to kill to prove their righteousness. Yet, we are equally certain today that, for the most part, their actions were misguided at best and essentially evil at worst. What right do we have to be so certain when they were equally if not more certain *they* were correct?

If we maintain a stance of smug self-righteousness and certainty in the face of all that we believe is evil, in what way have we really changed? Or is it only the targets of our condemnation that have changed? How can we convince outsiders to believe we are not the church of the 12th or 15th centuries if our attitude is predominantly the same?

I am proposing a motto for our church in this new, bright, shining millennium. It is: "We might be wrong."

We can do no other than act according to what we believe is right. Admitting our actions might be wrong is not advocating inactivity or stasis for fear that we are wrong. We must continue to act according to what we believe is right, guided by God's Word and the learning of the ages. At the same time, however, we must always contain in the forefront of our minds the fact that we might be wrong.

This ethic of uncertainty, of doubt, is the only way to protect ourselves from the sin of pride, of arrogance. It is the only way to avoid the mistakes our forebears made: of being so certain they were right they were willing to commit atrocious deeds in the name of that certainty.

The ethic of uncertainty will also open the way to tolerance and acceptance of other belief systems — who also may be wrong, but who may, in fact, be right. By continually reassessing our values, the Presbyterian Church will be flexible enough to meet the vast changes that will greet us in this millennium. At the same time, continual reassessment will provide the basis for the strong continuity of the values that are important, and which we do, indeed, believe are not wrong.

In the true Christian spirit of humility, let us greet the challenges of the future not with a killing certainty but with a self-confident uncertainty: "I think I am right — but I may be wrong." R

1054	Eastern Orthodox Church breaks away from Roman Catholic Church; relations not resumed until 20th century
1096	First Crusade
1147	Second Crusade
1189	Third Crusade
1204	Fourth Crusade
1228	Fifth Crusade
1231	Catholic Inquisition to stamp out heresy begins
1248	Sixth Crusade
1270	Seventh Crusade
1378	Great Schism — Europe divided between two popes
1409	The writings of John Wycliffe and his followers, the Lollards, declared heretical
1415	Reformer Jan Hus burned at the stake
1431	Joan of Arc burned at the stake
1479	Spanish Inquisition reaches its height
1492	Christopher Columbus arrives in North America; beginning of five centuries of conversion of native populations to Christianity, at times using force
1517	Martin Luther posts his 95 Theses, beginning Protestant Reformation
1524	Peasants War in Germany
1534	Henry VIII declares England Anglican; Roman Catholics executed
1546	German religious wars begin
1553	Michael Servetus burned at stake by John Calvin for founding Unitarianism
1562	Huguenot wars in France
1572	St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre
1618	Thirty Years War begins in Germany over religion
1673	British Test Act bans non-Anglicans from government participation
1685	Louis XIV revokes Edict of Nantes that protected Protestants
1712	Religious warfare begins in Switzerland
1833	Slave trade abolished in the British Empire
1916	Easter Rising in Ireland
1933	Persecution of Jews begins in Germany; Western countries refuse entry to Jewish refugees
1939	Jewish Holocaust begins, tacitly supported by Roman Catholic Church
1948	Israel established at expense of Palestinian Muslims
1972	Bloody Sunday in Northern Ireland
1990s	Religious and ethnic warfare begins between Christians and Muslims in Yugoslavia

Kathy Cawsey, a member of Knox Church, Waterloo, Ont., is continuing her PhD studies at the University of Toronto.

John Congram

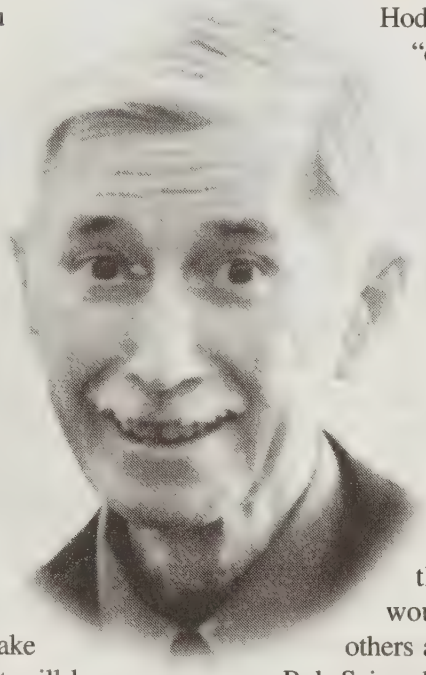
Remembering Jack

"To be seen and known and enjoyed by people as one of the disciples and friends of Jesus is the highest vision of my new-born youth, the simplest dream in my aging ... "

— Jack McIntosh, in a 1988 letter to Catherine Thompson

As the General Assembly listens to Jack McIntosh speak, after receiving accolades for 40 years of work with the Korean Christian Church in Japan, almost everything is as it has always been. Despite being near death (Jack would die less than two days later), his voice remains strong. When he announces he will try to keep his remarks brief, we know it is a promise he will find difficult to keep. And the message? The same as it has been for 40 years. You are God's people. You have been called. You have a mission. Let's get on with it.

As he speaks, my mind wanders back to our days together at Knox College. I see him covered in mud, standing on the back campus in the midst of a soccer game. While he urges us on to greater effort, many of us would sooner accept defeat and slink back into the college for a warm shower. Not Jack, not until he has expended every ounce of energy on the field of battle. That enthusiasm for life and living in the service of God never leaves him, even now as the hiss of his oxygen attempts to drown out his words.



Beth leans over to tell him the ambulance from Sunnybrook Hospital has arrived to take him back to his hospital bed. He says he will make an effort to bring his remarks to a close. But it will be difficult. He has so much more he wishes to share. This is a night he could not and would not miss.

He invites friends to return with him to his hospital room. He reminds them: "You are signed up. You are enlisted in the J.H.M. subversive gospel movement." Then he requests that they share the Lord's Supper together. He asks Priscilla Anderson, who had served in Japan with them, to officiate.

Jack McIntosh grew up on a farm near Guelph, Ontario. Colleague Rodger Talbot points out Jack was "an unapologetic farm boy" who had the "wonderful gift shared by many farmers of being able to smile through grim and difficult circumstances." Longtime family friend Ruth Alison recalls meeting Jack for the first time while visiting her cousins on a farm near the McIntoshes. It was always a delightful time with "George and Agnes McIntosh and their four sons." Many years later in the late 1960s, she encountered Jack again while working at Princess Margaret Hospital as an oncologist. She had been asked to see a young man who had a recurrence of Hodgkin's disease. "I soon learned," she recalls, "during his check-ups, that his mission came first and his physical condition would not be allowed to interfere with God's work for him. He would listen intently to my advice and, then, go away and do what he felt led to do."

Friends and teachers from his schooldays all remember Jack's athletic prowess. His high school basketball coach, Ross Pauli, recalls choosing Jack as the point guard for the team — the position with the responsibility "to execute the game plan devised by the coach." Not surprising, he notes, that God chose Jack to work with the Koreans in Japan — "a person who would inspire respect, employ the talents of others and give his all to the very end." Classmate Bob Seim also recalls Jack playing a major role in organizing the youth of Guelph's churches in the 1950s to participate in the Older Boys Parliament. Prophetically, Jack was chosen leader of the Opposition to debate major social and theological issues of the day.

Few of us think of Jack without, at the same time, thinking of his wife, Beth. "Their names," Rodger Talbot remarks, "automatically go together in our consciousness." Childhood friend Bob Seim recalls that partnership beginning while they were in high school. He remembers the corn roasts and sleigh rides they organized and how they rounded up "all the

socially challenged, ensuring we each had a date" for the graduation dance. That partnership culminated when, together, the McIntoshes received honorary degrees from Knox College in 1987 and, then, at the General Assembly in 1994, when they received the E. H. Johnson Award for mission on the cutting edge.

Jack is best known throughout the church for his long campaign against the Japanese Alien Registration Law. Jack refused to be fingerprinted, a requirement for all foreigners under this law. As a result, he was refused a re-entry permit; so he remained in Japan for 10 years, receiving his honorary degree from Knox College *in absentia*. He sued the government, which resulted in a seven-year trial he eventually lost; however, he regained his missionary visa so he could visit Canada once again. The fingerprinting law, that affected mainly Koreans living in Japan, finally changed. Rodger Talbot recalls Jack as "one of the most single-minded individuals I have ever known." Without this characteristic, this Japanese law would probably still be in place today. As Talbot notes further, "His single-mindedness on this issue inspired others, including famous jurists who were not Christians, to join his team."

Jack always had a broad outlook on things, always tried to build partnerships between churches and peoples. Glen Davis recalls being billeted with Jack on a college choir tour. After speaking at one of the services and feeling he had done pretty well, Glen asked Jack for his opinion. "Glen, that was very good," Jack replied in his intense, gentle way, "but you might want to consider that there could be more to the gospel than what you suggested."

Jack never forgot his roots or the partnership of his home church, St. Andrew's, Guelph, that supported him throughout his time in Japan. A few months before his death, he returned to St. Andrew's for a welcome home party for Beth and himself. He and Beth had gone to Japan during the ministry of Forbes Thomson. Forbes's widow, Catherine, was on hand to present Jack with her husband's doctoral gown.

"John loved his Lord with all his heart and, to that end, considered his calling as an ordained minister of the gospel a privilege and a joy."

— Beth McIntosh

It seems ironic that Jack should die as The Presbyterian Church in Canada began its year of "Equipping the laity." On the same night it was launched at General Assembly, Jack received thanks for his work in founding a laity movement in the Korean Christian Church in Japan. In his response, he coined the phrase, "Without the laity, there is no church."

Jack took a liking to one of his doctors during his last days, Doctor Aman. His last words to Beth were: "Pray for him, that he will feel a deep sense of commissioning, and radiate his love for people, and take joy in putting his very best gifts to work in the service of the people."

Glen Davis got it right when he said: "Jack called forth the best in his friends and family and colleagues. He pushed us to reach our fullest potential in living out the gospel."

Joy. Everyone who knew Jack spoke of his joy and exuberance for living. "He may have had some periods of bad moods over the past 40 years," Rodger Talbot recalls, "but I never experienced one." Jack was always ready for a good joke. His Grade 11 year-book describes a class party: " … we went for a dip in the pool. Here our poor Clarabeth had an unfortunate time eluding the ducking and splashing of the boys (mainly Jack M.)."

Years later at Knox College, Jack helped engineer an engagement party for fellow student Zander Dunn, a mere 10 minutes after Zander had presented his future bride with a ring. Despite these high jinks, Jack and I ended up as ushers at Nancy and Zander's wedding a few months later.

Deep joy remained with him until the end. After hearing Jack speak at the General Assembly, a young minister reported to Glen Davis, "It blows my mind that Jack McIntosh could come here last night in the condition he was in and talk to us about joy." In an interview in 1994, Jack spoke of "the privilege of living in mission." His calling was a part of who he was. And at its heart was great joy.

"One of my lasting memories," Ruth Alison recalls, "is that of Beth, Janette [the McIntoshes' daughter] and I singing 'The Lord's Prayer' and 'The Lord is my shepherd' around Jack's stretcher in the echocardiogram lab at Sunnybrook Hospital at his request. When he went back to his room the day before he died, we all sang 'Great is thy faithfulness.'"

After 40 years in Japan, Jack came back to Canada to retire — well, sort of. He looked forward to five more years working with students at Vancouver School of Theology. That was not to be. Neither was retirement. Just as well because, although Jack had a large vocabulary, retirement was not a word with which he was familiar. "He lived with his boots on and he died with his boots on," his classmate Willard Pottinger said at a memorial service, "scoring another shot on goal after the final whistle had blown, confounding the referees, the doctors and nurses … and his friends." R

Jack McIntosh lay leadership exchange program

A memorial fund has been established in Jack's name for lay leadership exchange. Send donations to: International Ministries, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, Ont. M3C 1J7. Make cheques payable to The Presbyterian Church in Canada and note it is for the Jack McIntosh Fund.

Lynne Madsen

My feelings about Nicaragua

A volunteer answers a cry for help, then responds to queries as to how she felt about her experience

In 1996, John and Viola Duff visited St. Andrew's Church in Red Deer, Alberta, telling of their missionary work in Nicaragua. After the presentation, I said, "This is what I must do — go and help." With the backing of the Presbytery of Central Alberta, a picnic and talent show was planned to raise funds. Enough money was raised for my airfare and, with the help of local churches, medical supplies were gathered. I visited Nicaragua for two weeks.

It started with a feeling of emptiness, then a need to help.

There was a feeling of discouragement when the planning didn't go well at first.

A feeling of support with the commitment of others who rallied together at the talent show.

A feeling of fear about the unknown when I left for Nicaragua.

A feeling of acceptance when John and Viola Duff took me in.

A feeling of anger when authorities confiscated all my belongings because of the government upheaval.

A sense of frustration by day 11 because my belongings, including the medical supplies and school clothes, were still being held.

A feeling of loneliness when I phoned home and talked to my family, especially to my son; but a feeling of love when Viola saw me crying and hugged me, whispering that, after four years, she still cried every time she spoke to her children back home.

A feeling of sickness when I visited the city dump and saw families with little children living there in cardboard boxes, going through the garbage looking for food.

A feeling of guilt when I visited a family of nine living in a small, one-room house. I knew I would go home to a nice house that had rooms for everything we do.

A feeling of accomplishment when I finally received my belongings and gave the supplies to the school and medical clinic.

A feeling of sickness when I visited the city dump and saw families with little children living there in cardboard boxes, going through the garbage looking for food.

A feeling of accomplishment when I gave the supplies to the school and medical clinic

A feeling of sadness when I was sure there was something else I could do, but I didn't know what.

A feeling of togetherness when we all went to a Roman Catholic church service in one of the bad neighbourhoods of the city. A man translated the whole service for me, even though it made a bit of a scene, and then asked me to take Communion with everyone.

A feeling of joy the evening of the 13th when I discovered John had gone all over the city to buy me a birthday cake.

A feeling of terror when driving down the street, before and during the election, and seeing so many military police armed with machine guns and rifles; they could stop anyone for anything.

A sense of gratitude to everyone who took me somewhere, told me a story, translated for me, fed me, transported me — and everything else people willingly and gratefully did for me.

A feeling of sadness when I left John and Viola, hugging them for the last time.

A feeling of peace and calmness on the plane ride home.

A feeling of excitement when I cleared customs and knew that, any minute, I would see Phillip, my son. A feeling that I wanted to drop to my knees, cry, hold him and never let go.

The strangest feeling was confusion — not knowing what I felt or not knowing what to say. Confused that, sometimes, when someone said goodbye, I cried.

For weeks after I returned, I could laugh, cry and get upset all within five minutes, or even in the same sentence.

A feeling of thankfulness that God had called me to go on this mission. R

Lynne Madsen attends St. Andrew's Church in Red Deer, Alta. The Duffs now live in Newfoundland where John is the interim minister at St. David's Church in St. John's.

Ted Siverns



I thank my God for my humility

Pride is like the rooster that thinks its crowing calls forth the dawn

Luke 18:9-14

The title is from Shakespeare's *Richard III* but it is not an uncommon prayer as a reading of this passage illustrates.

Jesus spoke about prayer. He taught that prayer has to do with our attitude toward God and to life. Two men appeared in the temple. One of them, a Pharisee, prayed a prayer of thanksgiving, a prayer that listed his assets: he was not like those who extorted or were unjust and he was not an adulterer, but he was a man who fasted twice a week and paid tithes on everything. He was certainly not like that other fellow across the room.

The other man, a tax collector, also prayed. He prayed a prayer of confession, a prayer that listed his liabilities. Not much of a prayer it seems. He lowered his head, beat his chest and prayed that God would be merciful to him, a sinner.

Jesus spoke of the relative value of the two prayers, favouring the prayer of the tax collector rather than that of the Pharisee. Why? What was the problem?

(1) The Pharisee prayed a prayer of self-satisfaction. Who needs God if we have our act together and are already better than other people? Self-satisfied people tell others and report to God how great they are. This can get tiring even for God it seems! There is an Arab proverb that warns about the person who makes a display of his religious accomplishments: "If your neighbour has made one pilgrimage to Mecca, watch him; if two, avoid him; if three, move to another street."

(2) The Pharisee prayed a prayer that was hypocritical. By definition, a hypocrite is an actor, one who attempts to convince others that he is what he is not. Those who pronounce themselves better than others may act in such a way that they fool themselves, but they do not fool God.

(3) The Pharisee prayed a prayer out of his pride. Pride, wrote G. K. Chesterton, is "seeing oneself out of proportion to the universe." Pride is like the rooster that thinks its crowing calls forth the dawn. Pride is like standing on our tiptoes, said Lao-Tsu long ago; we are bound to fall. To quote Proverbs 11:2: "When pride comes, then comes disgrace." Sometime before 180 BC, the book known as Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach (10:12), included the warning: "The beginning of human pride is to forsake the Lord; the heart has withdrawn from its Maker." When Gregory the Great drew up his list of the seven deadly sins in the sixth century, he placed pride at the top.

(4) The Pharisee prayed a prayer that demonstrated his prejudice. His prayer implied that he was superior and the tax collector was inferior. There is no attempt to meet or to understand the other; it is prejudice through and through.

Pride and prejudice are close relatives. Pride breeds prejudice in individuals and societies. When the principle characters in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* overcame their pride, they discovered their prejudice had gone with it. Prejudice does not see the other as an individual but looks with the blind eyes of pride. Such were the Hatfields and the McCoys, and so were the Pharisees toward almost everyone else. To quote a sad line from somewhere now forgotten, "We are sisters yet we do not speak."

What of the tax collector? He prayed out of his need and humility: "How dare I stand before God even to ask for forgiveness?" Humility is being open to others and to new experiences, sensitive and responsive to the presence and needs of others. It is being honest before God and others.

Humility is not self-abasement but a proper recognition of who we are in relation to others and to God. A proper kind of humility recognizes both strengths and limitations. Phillips Brooks is helpful:

> The true way to be humble is not to stoop till thou art smaller than thyself, but to stand at thy real height against some higher nature that will show thee what the real smallness of thy greatness is.

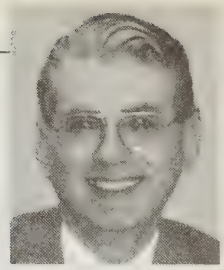
The smallness of our greatness. That should prevent our praying, "I thank my God for my humility"! R

For discussion and reflection

- Which of the prayers is more common: the prayer of the Pharisee or the tax collector?
- Look up the word "pride" in a Bible concordance. How many times does it occur and in what circumstances?
- Consider the following verses from Proverbs:
  When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but wisdom is with the humble. (11:2)
  A person's pride will bring humiliation, but one who is lowly in spirit will obtain honour. (29:23)
- Are there examples of a "good" pride? Check II Corinthians 7:4 and Galatians 6:4.

L. E. (Ted) Siverns is the minister of First Church in New Westminster, B.C.

Tony Plomp



Suicide
is not an easy subject

question: *Is suicide a sin? How should Christians look on it? Do people who commit suicide end up in hell?*

The church has historically regarded suicide as a "mortal sin" in that it is the wilful and deliberate destruction of one's God-given life that only the Lord has the right to terminate. The commandment still stands, "You shall not commit murder." Those who committed suicide were denied a "Christian burial." This may still be true in some Christian communities.

Suicide is sometimes motivated by a desire to avoid bearing the earthly consequences of one's actions. Or an individual may commit suicide in order to exact a deliberate and terrible vengeance on those left behind. While committing such an act, the person may be so self-obsessed he or she may have no regard for the life or safety of others. I think here of the alleged suicide of a co-pilot who gained full control of an Egyptian airliner flying from New York City to Cairo and, in a fit of anguish, plunged his plane into the Atlantic Ocean, taking hundreds of people to their deaths.

Today, there is much talk about doctor-assisted suicide. It is practised in some parts of the world as a legal option for those who are terminally ill and for whom no medication appears to provide relief. Those who request this service from the medical profession clearly do not see it as a sinful act but rather as the merciful ending of a physically or emotionally pain-wracked life.

Much more needs to be done in the area of palliative care to enable people to die with dignity. In some cases, however, people appear to be ending their lives with medical assistance when there is still much life to be lived. In some jurisdictions, it appears people request this form of euthanasia because they are suffering deep depression. As a society, we need to tread carefully on these grounds.

Suicide is not an easy subject to address. There are so many variables that may come into play. It would appear to me that a lot of people who commit suicide do so in a state of profound and utter desperation. Such deeply wounded people are not in, what we would call, their "right mind."

The fact remains, however, that despite such occasional thoughts, human beings normally have a "preferential option for life," even under the darkest of circumstances. Suicide is an aberration. It is not God's will for us.

I write this shortly after having conducted a memorial service for a woman to whom I ministered for many years and who allegedly committed suicide. She was a woman of faith who, throughout her many struggles in life, continued to seek to touch the hand of God. But she suffered from psychotic episodes and was torn within by the inexplicable spectres of the mind. I believe she may have ended her life during such an episode.

Human beings normally have a "preferential option for life," even under the darkest of circumstances

People sometimes commit suicide accidentally. They are crying out for help, trying to get attention, but in doing so go too far. They take one too many pills or cut their wrists too deeply. I wonder how much of this is a tragic factor in the significant number of teen suicides that occur in our society?

This leads me to observe that it is common for people to have suicidal thoughts without ever acting upon them. Even though such fleeting thoughts may occur to most of us at some point in our lives, there is a time when they must be shared with others so that they do not come to overwhelm us. We need to listen closely to each other, seek support and help, and receive the love and strength of the Lord through others. It is also important for anyone to take careful note when a person threatens suicide and to take this threat seriously. We need to be alert to the danger signs, such as when an individual begins to give things away, write "closure notes" to friends and the like.

In the service, I spoke in full assurance of faith that she is with the Lord. I believe in the gospel of God's amazing grace. And I know God's love for her was unconditional and limitless. Romans 8 tells us clearly that nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. So we leave the final destiny of any person completely in the hands of a God of whom we sing: "For the love of God is broader than the measures of [our] mind[s], and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind" ("There's a wideness in God's mercy," *Book of Praise*, 1972). R

Please send questions for Rev. Tony Plomp to tony_plomp@telus.net or 4020 Lancelot Dr., Richmond, B.C. V7C 4S3.



THE CONGREGATION OF Knox Church, Dunnville, Ont., recently honoured Arthur Bradford for his 50 years of dedicated service as an elder. Pictured with Arthur are his wife, Dorothy, and Rev. Jeff Veenstra.



THE CONGREGATION OF St. Andrew's Church, Guelph, Ont., welcomed home Jack and Beth McIntosh during the Easter Sunday service. The McIintoshes, who left St. Andrew's in 1961 to begin missionary work in Japan, retired this year after 40 years of service. Pictured with them is Catherine Thomson, whose husband, the late Forbes Thomson, was minister of St. Andrew's from 1957 to 1979. Catherine, who gave the welcome home speech, presented Jack with her husband's doctoral gown. (She had previously presented him with the doctoral hood.) The mission committee presented Beth with a corsage, a certificate of recognition and a gift certificate. [*Editor's note:* Jack McIntosh passed away on June 7.]



THE CONGREGATION OF Knox Church, Ospringe, Ont., held a special event to recognize a few of the many people who have made great efforts over the years to keep the local church alive. Pictured are Ward and Flora Bruce (front), Norman and Hilda McKenzie (left) and Helen and Alex Morrison — all of whom have contributed to the life of the congregation in many ways. An appropriate and personal letter of appreciation was presented to each couple.



THE CHOIR OF St. Andrew's Church, Sherbrooke, Que., presented Dorothy Smith with an oil painting recognizing her 50 years as a choir member. With Dorothy (second from right) are artist Eileen Drew, 55-year choir member Ross Beattie, and Wyatt Savage (right). The presentation took place in St. George's Anglican Church, Lennoxville, where the congregation is currently holding services, St. Andrew's having been damaged beyond repair by a wind storm in July 1999.

Please note: Photos submitted for People & Places must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they are to be returned. Also, please try to ensure all pictures are clear and do not include a multitude of people. Colour or black-and-white photos are acceptable, but negatives and slides cannot be used. Thank you.

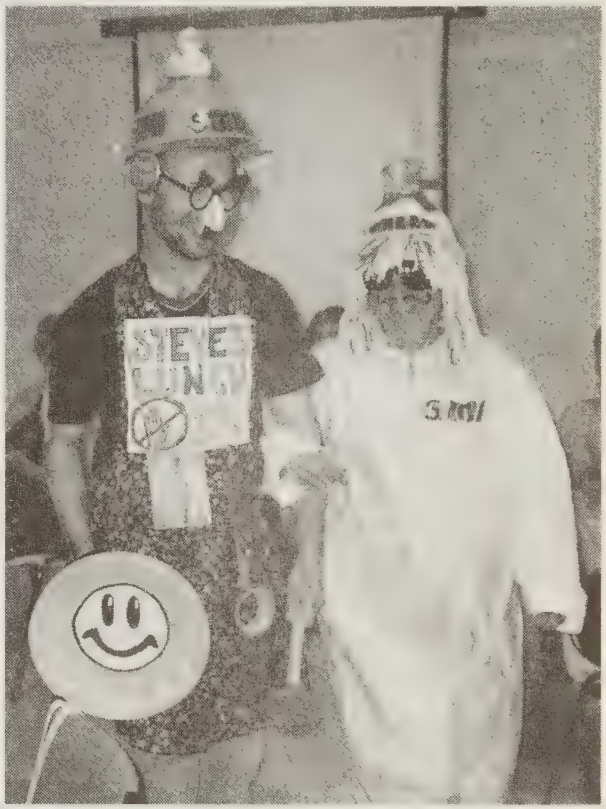


MEMBERS OF THE Knox Community Kitchen of Knox Church, Goderich, Ont., display the foods of their labour. Once a month, an average of 10 participants and six volunteer helpers meet to prepare five low-cost main course meals — 150 servings — for participants to take home (as well as sharing with each other over lunch). Each participant pays only 25 cents. The outreach project was initiated over six years ago by Mary Hay, its current co-ordinator



AN EXTERIOR CELTIC CROSS, presented by the Murphy family to the congregation of Iona Church, Dartmouth, N.S., was dedicated to the glory of God and in memory of Philip Murphy, a dedicated member of the congregation. Pictured (L to R) are: Rev. Cynthia Chenard, Joanne (Murphy) Stoyles, Jane Murphy and Rod Murphy.

STEVE FILYK (left), youth minister at St. Giles Church, Prince George, B.C., is well-armed for his summer adventure of helping to build a community centre in Othkob, Cambodia, with Hope International. Accompanying Steve is Larry, half of the clowning care-taking team Harry and Larry. In total, $2,300 was raised toward the project on the June dessert night.





WARRANT OFFICER (Ret) Bob Reid, a member of the Church of St. David and St. Martin, Ottawa, was awarded the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal in recognition of his service at El Arish, Egypt, from 1958-59. Rev. Ian Gray presented the medal to Bob during a recent worship service.



THE 90TH BIRTHDAY of Betty McLeod, pictured with Rev. Richard Moffat and his wife, Margie, was celebrated at St. David's Church, Kelowna, B.C.



SOME OF THE 43 new "millennium" members of Knox Church, St. Thomas, Ont., are pictured at a coffee-break sponsored by the session.

WINNING KENNEDY (fourth from right, in vest) displays a winning smile upon receiving his Canadian citizenship on Feb. 7. Present for the happy occasion were his mother, brother and three sisters newly arrived from Burma. Also pictured are friend Mona Htoo, local MP Joe Commuzi, the presiding judge and an RCMP representative. Winning and his family attend First Church, Thunder Bay, Ont.



THE CONGREGATION OF Gateway Community Church, Toronto, has been enjoying the sound of heavenly harps on Sunday mornings — autoharps, to be precise. Music director Janine Marzec is shown giving instructions to autoharp group members (L to R) Joelle Burke, Byron Williams, Stephanie Williams and Shane Pennant.



THREE PRESBYTERIAN NUNS and a "brown paper package tied up with string" were among the participants at a special sing-along presentation of the classic film *The Sound of Music* in Vancouver. The four participants — (L to R) Marlene Scott, Jean Lawrence, Glenda Stuart and Karenne Hartley — are members of the choir of West Vancouver Church.



A ROBBIE BURNS DINNER was held at Knox Church, St. Catharines, Ont. Margaret McClory, who headed the event's organizing committee, served as hostess for the evening.



AS PART OF THE 125th anniversary celebrations of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, "covenant boxes" were distributed to churches across Canada for use as time capsules. During the month of January, the congregations of St. Stephen's Church, St. Stephen, and Greenock Church, St. Andrew's, N.B., gathered photos, children's handprints, short essays of church memories and other historical items. On Feb. 11, the boxes in each congregation were closed and dedicated in a service conducted by Rev. Stephen Cho. The boxes will be reopened in 2011.





A COMMEMORATION SERVICE was held recently to recognize the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Knox Presbyterian Cemetery in Mitchell, Ont. A tree was planted by the cemetery board in memory of all those who have worked and cared for the cemetery over the years. The Moses family also planted a tree in memory of Clarke Moses, a long-serving elder at Knox Church and a former member of the cemetery board. Watching Clarke's widow, Ina, with the shovel are son-in-law and daughter Garry and Karen Milne, and Rev. Peter Bush.



THE CHILDREN OF the grades 4, 5 and 6 Sunday school class of Clarkson Road Church, Mississauga, Ont., organized a bake sale to raise money for earthquake victims in El Salvador and India. The class raised $133.50.

IN KEEPING WITH THE FLAMES focus for 2000-2001 (children, teens and young adults), the congregation of St. James Church, Stouffville, Ont., hired Lynne Brampton as youth ministry co-ordinator. She is pictured surrounded by a few of her new friends.



ARLENE ONUOHA, an International Ministries staffperson serving in Nigeria, was a special guest at St. Andrew's Church, Kitchener, Ont., on Feb. 18. Arlene, seen here with senior minister Rev. Bill Lamont, told the children's story at the 9:30 and 11a.m. services, and talked to the children about mission when they left the congregation for the rotation part of their Sunday school.



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The Path of Life: Memoirs of Clare and Grace McGill *by Grace McGill (Essence Publishing, 2001, $12.95). Reviewed by John Congram.*

Have you ever wondered how a person goes about taking a heretofore-unknown language and putting it into written form? This is the story of one who did just that.

Clare McGill grew up on a farm near Glencoe, Ontario, to become a lifelong missionary and Bible translator in Taiwan. When he was sent to Taiwan by The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1953, he first studied and learned Mandarin before moving on to his goal of putting Tayal, the language of one of the mountain tribes of Taiwan, into written form.



To accomplish this task takes single-minded commitment, combined with unlimited patience, along with a propensity for exactness and detail. There were also some costs involved in the process: the sacrifices made by missionary families, their frequent moves and separations, excessive demands, and interference by government officials who promoted only one official language.

Not only did Clare have to struggle through all of this but, once having accomplished the translation, he also had to work to sell copies and encourage its use. One of the creative solutions to the latter was to put portions of Scripture to popular Tayal tunes and record them on records and tapes.

Clare and his co-workers produced 20 publications in the Tayal language. These included three literary primers, two Laubach readers and workbooks, four revisions of the hymn-book, the Christmas story, catechism, the Gospel of Mark and workbook, Acts and I Corinthians, I and II Timothy and Titus, In the Beginning (Genesis 1-11) and workbook, the Tayal New Testament, and Selected Psalms.

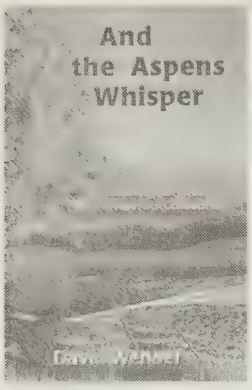
Clare's wife, Grace, who was very much a part of the process during their 31 years in Taiwan, wrote this book. Sometimes, it seems as if you are reading Clare's diary of daily events. That is because Grace relies heavily on Clare's detailed and frequent correspondence back to Canada during their time in Taiwan. The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, Rev. Yabut Syat, encouraged Grace to write the story of her husband's efforts. Being from the mountain tribes himself, he did not want this story to be lost — "not simply to enjoy its historical, social and anthropological significance but, above all, to recognize God's grace and faithfulness through the lives of his dear servants."

A side benefit for the reader is the opportunity to meet some of the many missionaries who went to Taiwan from The Presbyterian Church in Canada during the 1950s and the three succeeding decades. Also, part of the book is a 36-page appendix describing the rise of "the Spirit Movement" in Taiwan during the McGills' time in Taiwan. This is based on a paper Clare presented to the Board of World Mission in 1975.

Anyone with an interest in Taiwan, the Presbyterian mission there or what motivates and sustains a missionary over the long haul will want to read this book.

And the Aspens Whisper: Listening for God in Nature's Cathedral *by David Webber (Webber Ink, 2001, $17.95). Reviewed by John Congram.*

David Webber is one of the favourite story-tellers of *Record* readers. He has appeared regularly in its pages over the past two decades. For 12 years, David has ministered in a rural ministry in British Columbia called the Cariboo Presbyterian Church. It is made up of several house churches. This is the second book of stories David has published.



David claims his stories are about nature. He divides the book into four sections: fall, winter, spring and summer. But these stories are as much about human nature as they are about the out-of-doors that David so obviously loves. Essentially, they are stories about us — our struggles, sins, fears, tragedies and hopes. We hear about the coyotes that hunt down and kill a deer. This incident becomes the springboard to reflect on Remembrance Day and the tragedy of war and to ask the question, "Is there hope?"

Along with the buzzards and foxes, the beautiful lakes and whispering trees, we also meet many interesting characters. Like Packsack Willie, who often rode to work with David, who survived by collecting pop bottles and cans. Or Nature Boy who rescued two young children who had become lost in a cave.

In this book, we also learn more about David Webber. The first chapter tells how he was called from a teaching position to become a Presbyterian minister. He talks about his marriage to Linda, itself a vocation. He tells of the death of his beloved father and, with great honesty, shares his grieving process with its "what ifs" and "if onlys."

Indeed, honesty is one of the book's most endearing qualities. Like the Bible, David does not gloss over the weaknesses of others nor does he fear poking fun at his own faults and foibles. "My nest is crammed full of not really needed boy-toys, clothes hardly worn, power tools seldom used and electronic equipment barely broken in. They lie around like bones in my nest, the remnants of yet another treasure hunt."

Behind all the stories, never far from the surface, lies David's whimsical sense of humour. "Grandma," he tells us, "used to put baking soda in her beans. She said it was to take the wind out of them."

In this book, David is more explicit about his faith in Jesus Christ and its importance for every aspect of life. "It never ceases to astonish me that Christ has the amazing grace to turn the stones of hard times into cut diamonds." And that, in the end, is the theme that holds all the stories together: God's grace holds us and will not let us go.

Celebrating Our Heritage: A History of St. James Presbyterian Church, Truro, Nova Scotia
(Advocate, 2001, $12 plus $2 postage from St. James Church, 142 Queen St., Truro, N.S. B2N 2B5).

The worship committee of St. James Church in Truro, Nova Scotia, has produced a fine 115-page history of the congregation on its 75th anniversary. If the list of ministers who have served the congregation is any indication, this is a congregation with a diverse history. Ministers as different as Ritchie Bell, later to become a professor at The Presbyterian College, Montreal, to Perry F. Rockwood, who left in 1947 to establish a radio ministry, served the congregation. The present minister, Clair MacLeod, has served the congregation for 25 years.



Other interesting features of this history include: eight pages of colour photographs of the church's stained glass windows, a brief history of early Presbyterian churches in the Truro area and the results of the 1925 vote on Union by local churches that voted overwhelmingly in favour (only one congregation voted to remain Presbyterian by a single vote).

Sprinkled throughout the narrative are black-and-white photographs from past and present.

Most books reviewed may be purchased through The Book Room, 50 Wynford Dr., North York, Ont. M3C 1J7. Prices include shipping and handling but not GST. Do not send payment with order. An invoice will follow. Please include name and location of congregation. Toll-free order line: 1-800-619-7301, ext. 301, e-mail: bookroom@presbyterian.ca.

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Answers to Presbyterian quiz
from page 26
1. (b) John Calvin
2. (c) French
3. (c) a lawyer
4. (c) a book, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*
5. (b) Geneva

DEATHS

McLEAN, REV. MALCOLM SERVISS, died in Winnipeg, Sunday, June 17, 2001. Mac was born June 19, 1915, in Brampton, Ontario, where he spent his youth. After completing Grade 13, Mac served the church as a student minister in Bar River, Ont., Benalto/Eckville, Alta., and Gonar, Man.

Before enlisting in the RCAF and #2 Wireless school in Brandon, Mac supplied the pulpit at First Church, Kenora, Ont., and worked for radio station CKCA. He spent the war years as a radar technician on the West Coast. February 13, 1943, Mac married Pearl Hanson, his loving partner in life and ministry for 58 years.

Following the war, Mac graduated from the University of Alberta (BA, 1947) and Knox College, Toronto (1950). Summers were spent as the student minister in Barvas (Dunleath) and Stornoway in Saskatchewan. Ordained by West Toronto Presbytery in St. Andrew's, Brampton, May 12, 1950, he returned to Saskatchewan with his family.

Mac was instrumental in founding the Presbyterian church in Yorkton, and dedicated the church building two years after his arrival. He was called to Moose Jaw and inducted into Knox Church, December 11, 1956. On March 1, 1964, he accepted an appointment to Elmwood Church, Winnipeg.

During his years in the pastorate, Mac served as moderator of the Synod of Saskatchewan, Assiniboia Presbytery, the Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, and Winnipeg Presbytery. He also served as missions convener for the Synod of Saskatchewan. Mac was a chaplain in the Army reserves and cadet corps in Yorkton, Moose Jaw and Winnipeg. He was promoted to Major-Chaplain and awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration (CD).

March 1, 1967, Mac became superintendent of missions for the Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. Over the next 18 years and many thousands of kilometres, he encouraged and supported various ministries from Thompson to Geraldton, and among Canada's native peoples. Mac retired in March 1985 but remained active in Winnipeg Presbytery and St. James Church.

Predeceased by brothers John (St. Catherines) and Donald (Brampton); Mac's brother Richard (Toronto) survives him. Mac is dearly missed by Pearl; their three sons, Malcolm Douglas and wife Melva (Vancouver), Grant and wife Sally (England), and Big Dave (blues musician) and wife Patti (Winnipeg); along with five grandchildren, Joseph and Naomi (England), and Megan, Celia, and Sam (Winnipeg). Mac's nephew Paul was a missionary in Taiwan; his niece Dianne (Ollerenshaw) ministers in Calgary.

BROWN, EDITH, longtime member of St. Paul's, Victoria Harbour, Ont., passed away on July 5, 2001.

INDUCTIONS and RECOGNITIONS

Adlam, Rev. Dean, Petrolia pastoral charge, Ont., August 26, 2001.

Samuel, Rev. Susan, ordained and inducted, Wyoming/Camlachie pastoral charge, Ont., August 19, 2001.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES and INTERIM MODERATORS

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Bass River, N.B., pastoral charge. Rev. Ralph MacKenzie, 106 Notre Dame, Atholville, N.B. E3N 3Z3.

Bathurst, N.B., St. Luke's. Rev. John Crawford, 7 Hierlihy Rd., Tabusintac, N.B. E9H 1Y5.

Charlottetown, St. James (The Kirk). Rev. Harry Currie, 130 Victoria Rd., Summerside, P.E.I. C1N 2G5; 902-436-2557.

Charlottetown, Zion (assistant minister). Rev. Steven Stead, RR 4, Montague, P.E.I. C0A 1R0.

Glace Bay, N.S., St. Paul's. Rev. Robert Lyle, 12 Lorway Ave., Sydney, N.S. B1P 4Z2; 902-564-4001; rdarjlyle@email.msn.com.

Hanwell (Fredericton), N.B., St. James. Rev. Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1M2; 506-455-8220; sapc@nbnet.nb.ca.

Montague, P.E.I., St. Andrew's; Cardigan, St. Andrew's. Rev. Roger MacPhee, Belfast Post Office, Belfast, P.E.I. C0A 1A0.

New Glasgow, N.S., St. Andrew's. Rev. Iona MacLean, Box 1003, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0; ionamac@auracom.com; 902-485-4298.

North Sydney, Cape Breton, N.S., St. Giles. Rev. Kenneth MacRae, 3 Queen St., Sydney Mines, N.S. B1V 1K4; 902-736-6394; kmacrae@ns.sympatico.ca.

Riverview, N.B., Bethel. Rev. Martin Kreplin, 90 Park St., Moncton, N.B. E1C 2B3.

Saint John, N.B., St. Columba. Rev. Ted Thompson, 101 Coburg St., Saint John, N.B. E2L 3B7; 506-634-7765.

Scotsburn, N.S., Bethel; Earltown, Knox; West Branch, Burns Memorial. Rev. Jeanette Fleischer, Box 142, River John, N.S. B0K 1N0; 902-351-2777; jen.fleisch@ns.sympatico.ca.

Springhill, N.S., St. David's; Oxford, St. James; Riverview, St. Andrew's. Rev. Kevin Steeper, RR 2, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0; 902-485-8944; thesteepers@auracom.com.

St. John's, Nfld., St. David's (effective March 1, 2002). Rev. Ian S. Wishart, 98 Elizabeth Ave., St. John's, Nfld. A1A 1R8.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Fort-Coulonge, Que., St. Andrew's; Bristol, Bristol Memorial. Rev. Milton A. Fraser, 80 Daniel St. N, Arnprior, Ont. K7S 2K8; 613-623-5531; standrew@storm.ca.

Melbourne, Que., St. Andrew's. Rev. Ross Davidson, 702 rue Lafontaine, Thetford Mines, Que. G6G 3J6; jrhdavidson@globetrotter.net.

Montreal, Cote Des Neiges. Rev. Dr. Clyde Ervine, The Presbyterian College, 3495 University St., Montreal, Que. H3A 2A8.

Montreal, Robert Campbell Taiwanese (half-time, English/Taiwanese bilingual assistant). Rev. Harry Kuntz, 92 Rockwyn Ave., Pointe Claire, Que. H9R 1W2.

Morrisburg, Ont., Knox; Dunbar, Dunbar Church. Rev. Mark Bourgon, PO Box 220, Finch, Ont., K0C 1K0; 613-984-0772; mbourgon@glen-net.ca.

Sherbrooke-Lennoxville, Que., St. Andrew's (effective by April 30, 2002). Contact: Mrs. Marlene Cox, 470 Swede Rd., Waterville, Que. J0B 3H0; 819-837-2086; triplejcox@sympatico.ca.

Stittsville (Ottawa), St. Andrew's. Rev. Tony Boonstra, 2 Church St., PO Box 498, Stittsville, Ont. K2S 1A6; boonstra@cyberus.ca.

Synod of Toronto and Kingston

Ajax, St. Andrew's. Rev. E.J. Briard, 255 Wright Cres., Ajax, Ont. L1S 5S5.

Ajax, St. Timothy's. Rev. Phillip Robillard, 447 Port Union Rd., Toronto, Ont. M1C 2L6; philrob@grace.on.ca; fax 416-284-8560.

Angus, Zion. Rev. Carol Smith, PO Box 354, Cookstown, Ont. L0L 1L0; bicpc@bconex.net.

Cambridge, Central. Rev. Mark Richardson, 10 Zeller Dr., Kitchener, Ont. N2A 4A8; kepc@golden.net.

Cambridge, St. Andrew's Hespeler. Rev. Wayne Dawes, 2 Grand Ave. S, Cambridge, Ont. N1S 2L2.

Cambridge, St. Giles. Rev. Linda Ashfield, 50 Erb St. W, Waterloo, Ont. N2L 1T1; ashfield@nonline.net.

Campbellford, St. Andrew's; Burnbrae, St. Andrew's. Rev. George Turner, 120 Murray St., Peterborough, Ont. K9H 2S5.

Colborne, Old St. Andrew's; Brighton, St. Andrew's. Rev. Doug Brown, 200 King St. W, Cobourg, Ont. K9A 2N1.

Crieff, Knox (half-time). Rev. Thomas J. Kay,

The Transitions column welcomes announcements of special events such as births, marriages, anniversaries, graduations, baptisms and the reception of new members, as well as death notices. The rate is $1 per word or $50 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.
All notices of pulpit vacancies, recognitions, ordinations and inductions will be charged to the congregation: $10 for the basic notice and $1 per word for additional information. (There will be no charge to congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.)
Contact the *Record* office regarding all items for the Transitions column.

20 Quebec St., Guelph, Ont. N1H 2T4; thomas@knoxguelph.ca.

Elmvale, Elmvale Church; Flos, Knox. Rev. Deborah Dolbear-Van Bilsen, 208 Mosley St., Wasaga Beach, Ont. L0L 2P0; wbpres@georgian.net.

Etobicoke, Mimico. Rev. Susanne Rescorl, 680 Annette St., Toronto, Ont. M6S 2C8; 416-767-2689; fax 416-767-1229.

Fenelon Falls, St. Andrew's; Glenarm, Knox. Rev. Doug Scott, RR 1, 22 Hillview Dr., Bobcaygeon, Ont. K0M 1A0.

Fergus, St. Andrew's. Rev. Linda Bell, 2 Cross St., Elmira, Ont. N3B 2S4; drbell@execulink.com.

Guelph, St. Andrew's. Rev. Angus Sutherland, 35 Roos St., Kitchener, Ont. N2P 2B9.

Maple, St. Andrew's. Rev. Bryn MacPhail, Box 164, 19 Stewart St., Beeton, Ont. L0G 1A0; 905-729-0055; bmacphal@netrover.com.

Markham, Chapel Place. Rev. George Beals, 10058 Yonge St., Richmond Hill, Ont. L4C 1T8. Potential candidates must have an intimate knowledge of Middle Eastern culture and be thoroughly fluent in Arabic and English.

Nobleton, St. Paul's. Rev. Sam Priestley, 143 Main St. N, Markham, Ont. L3P 1Y2.

Norval, Norval Church; Union Church. Rev. Mary Campbell, 22 James St., Georgetown, Ont. L7G 2H4; 905-877-8855; mcampbell@aztec-net.com.

Oakville, Trafalgar. Rev. Dennis Cook, 6945 Meadowvale TC Circle, Mississauga, Ont. L5N 2W7; 905-821-2753; revdjcook@hotmail.com.

Orillia, Orillia (St. Andrew's). Rev. Donald McKillican, 99 Peter St. N, Orillia, Ont. L3V 4Z3.

Orillia, St. Mark's. Rev. Carey Nieuwhof, RR 1, Comp. 126, Hawkestone, Ont. L0L 1T0; cnieuwhof@trinitycommunity.org; 705-487-1998.

Port Carling, Knox; Torrance, Zion. Rev. Michael Barnes, 45 McMurray St., Bracebridge, Ont. P1L 2A1; 705-645-4521.

Puslinch, Duff's. Rev. Don McCallum, 795 Scottsdale Dr., Guelph, Ont. N1G 3R8.

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Appin, Appin Church; Melbourne, Guthrie. Rev. Brian Nichol, RR 1, Dutton, Ont. N0L 1J0; 519-762-3724; revrev@webgate.net.

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called to wonder

Written by Erin Walton,
youth minister,
First Church, Edmonton

Do you say grace before you eat Thanksgiving dinner?

Why do you say grace?

Do you say grace only when you eat turkey?

What about when you are eating pizza? Do you say grace when you eat liver and spinach?

Even though we like certain foods better than others, all blessings, including food, come from God. Saying grace is a great way to thank God for all he gives us all year long.

DRAW YOUR FAVOURITE FOOD

Thanksgiving cards

1. Colour the pictures below.
2. Fold a piece of construction paper in half to make a card.
3. Cut out and paste pictures onto the front of the card.
4. Print inside: "I am thankful God created you!"
5. Give the card to someone you love.





Link to children's graces, psalms and much more online at: www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html

David Webber

The secret of Thanksgiving

Shifting the focus of Thanksgiving from things to God

Each autumn, at about this time of year, I find myself reflecting upon the secret for making a good Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving, like most family holidays, is often a bit of a letdown for me. You know how it is: we spend several weeks planning and looking forward to the special occasion and, when it finally arrives, it seldom lives up to expectations. We find ourselves feeling kind of flat when it's all over. So what's the secret for making a good Thanksgiving?

The other day, I was at a worship service with some families in a remote ranching area. About 20 of us, ranging in age from eight to 80, were sitting in a circle in the living room of the ranch house. Worship songs had been sung. Scripture had been read and reflected upon. We were getting ready to celebrate Communion. Before we started the Communion service, I asked each person to reflect for a minute and then share the one thing he or she was most thankful for. I expected people to focus on the many, or perhaps the not so many, blessings they had received of late. And I expected the list of blessings to include the new hay-mower that made cutting hay so much easier, the new pickup that made the weekly trip into town a lot more worry-free, and the 4-H ribbons adorning the walls to demonstrate a successful year of hard work with the livestock. I even expected the youngsters to list some of their new and much valued toys.

Each person reflected for some time and, then, the responses came one by one. One older person said he was particularly thankful for the gift of life God had given him and the years he had had to enjoy it with his family. Another said she was thankful for the gift of the beauty of God's creation and how God revealed himself in every sunset. One youngster said she was particularly thankful for the little brother God had given her for a playmate. The last to speak was a young teenager who said she was especially thankful for the ability God had given her to know him.

My mouth hung open as this circle of thankfulness was completed. I marvelled at how different it was. Not one material thing was named, though I knew there were many material things that could have been mentioned. I knew each person in the room was very thankful for the material things in their lives that made life easier or more enjoyable. But when push came to shove, what these folks were thankful for was God and what God was doing in their lives and relationships.

As I drove home after worship, much of my time was spent reflecting on what I had heard in the ranch house circle of thankfulness. The experience stood out for me like the moon in the crisp autumn sky. It evoked a kind of self-honesty I am seldom guilty of. I realized how much of my life focuses on material things. At least subconsciously, the size of the pile of gifts for the kids under the tree measures the quality of Christmas. At least in the back of my mind, how large my children's pile of chocolates is after their Easter egg hunt measures the quality of Easter. At least in my secret innermost being, how much material wealth I have to be thankful for measures the quality of Thanksgiving. My Thanksgiving prayer is so often, "O Lord, we have so MUCH to be thankful for."

This fit of honesty that sneaked up on me while travelling home made me realize there really is a secret to making a good Thanksgiving. It seemed to me that everyone in the ranch house circle of thankfulness knew the secret. When I dragged the night's experience through Scripture, I realized the Apostle Paul knew the secret, too. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul says he has learned to be content with whatever he has. He writes:

> "In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:12b-13, *NRSV*).

He puts an even sharper point on this when he writes in his letter to the folks at Thessalonica:

> "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (I Thessalonians 5:16-18, *NRSV*).

It appears to me that the secret to making a good Thanksgiving is in shifting the focus from how much I have to be thankful for to the One I am thankful to. This is "he who strengthens me," "my Lord and my God." The secret for making a good Thanksgiving is the same secret for making a good Christmas, a good Easter and, above all, a good life. It is, to put it succinctly, to place God at the centre, not what I have or don't have. I find this to be liberating and uplifting, especially during what has become a secular season, the season of Thanksgiving, the season of possessions.

Happy Thanksgiving! R

David Webber is a minister of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church, a house church ministry in the Cariboo District of British Columbia. This excerpt is from his latest book, *And the Aspens Whisper*. See review and advertisement in this issue.



Share the Gifts of a Lifetime.

God blesses each of us in a special way — *some with the gift of compassion, others with wisdom and still others with knowledge or understanding.* Whatever our gifts, it is when we share them that we come to know God's grace more deeply.

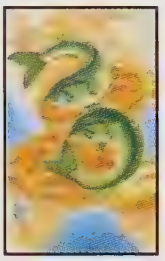
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To find out more about Charitable Gift Annuities or other financial tools that will help you make a difference, fill in and mail the coupon below.

"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 CORINTHIANS 9:7



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PRESBYTERIAN
Record

November 2001

After the attack

How then should we live?

pages 3, 6, 14, 15, 35



I come to the topic of ministry of the laity out of a genetically sound background. My father, a minister, had dignity; but my mother had the imagination in the family. I remember that she squirmed under the class structure in that old synod: there the laity were clearly the ground troops, and the clergy were the generals. In the town where I grew up, my mother had great troubles with this. I remember the district president, a particularly pompous man, came to preach at a conference. It was my turn to baby-sit (we had a large family) so my mother could go to church. When she returned I asked, "What did he say?"

She replied, "Nothing — for 30 minutes."

— Joseph Sittler in *Grace and Gravity*

War victims

In recent decades, the proportion of war victims who are civilians rather than combatants has leaped from five per cent to more than 90 per cent.

— Refugees

When Martin Niemöller was thrown into prison by the Nazis, as the story goes, a pastor visited him and asked, "Brother, why are you in prison?"

And he answered, "Brother, why are you not in prison?"

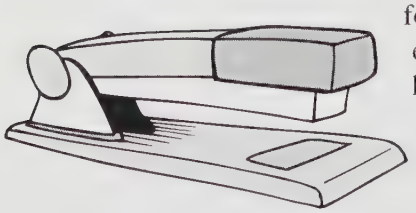
— Eberhard Busch

Here lies a man who knew how to enlist the service of better men than himself.

— Andrew Carnegie's tombstone

Ouch!

A minister confessed that the Ash Wednesday service had been stressful for him. He put the palm fronds from last Easter into a large metal can outside to burn them as usual. Unbeknown to him, as he bent over, he split the back seam of his pants from "belt to bottom." He took the ashes into the church, chatted with a few people, then started back up the aisle, followed by an elder who informed him of his problem. He rushed into the office, prayed quickly ("Dear God, what do I do now?"), locked the door, closed the blinds, removed his pants, stapled the seam, donned his robe and went back for the service. The tears in his eyes were not an emotional response to the service, although he hoped they'd be interpreted that way. Some of the staples became dislodged, and he was "sitting in agony" until the "daubing of the ashes part."



— Lorna Hillian as told by her sister

Teenagers

To keep things in perspective, far from being a sex-crazed bunch, on balance a smaller proportion of teenagers are having sex than their grandparents did.

— Reginald W. Bibby in *Canada's Teens: Today, Yesterday and Tomorrow*

Saints and martyrs



A number of years ago, when I was able, I used to attend vespers with a community of Benedictine nuns. I loved the quiet simplicity of the worship, the nuns anonymous in their habits, the liturgy so natural and unforced. It always seems much more spiritual than the religious fuss and murkiness of my Presbyterian congregation. I got to know one of the nuns quite well. One day in conversation she must have detected the romanticizing envy in me and said, "You think we're in ecstasy all the time in here don't you, Eugene? You probably think we levitate while we are washing up the dishes! Well, let me tell you something. We are a community of saints and martyrs — and the martyrs are the ones who have to live with the saints!" That cured me — for awhile, at least.

— Eugene Peterson in *The Wisdom of Each Other*

Critics

Who was it that said, "A critic is someone who comes onto the battlefield after the battle is over and shoots the wounded"?

— Anne Lamott

Computer blooper

The man who puts together our church bulletin every week tries to take computer shortcuts when possible by using the "global search" feature. One week, technology backfired when he commanded the computer to change the name of the Scripture reader from "Will" to "Murray." The reader's name came out fine, but the "global search" did its job a little too thoroughly in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done on earth" became "Thy Murray be done on earth"!

— Lyn Hill, London, Ontario

John Congram



After the attack

The question on everyone's mind after the terrorist attacks: what should we do next?

The effects of the terrorist attacks of September 11 continue to ripple across North America and the world. Even those who have no personal involvement probably know someone who knows someone who has been affected. The brother of our former paperboy was killed in New York City. A good friend lost his job here in Toronto because of his firm's cut-backs as a result of the attack. All of us, even those who fly frequently, have become a little more hesitant about getting on a plane.

And we have been changed in other ways as well. Some long-standing pacifists now urge that the Canadian military be beefed up. Poles indicate Canadians now feel much closer to Americans and are prepared to curtail some of their freedoms in ways inconceivable before these attacks.

To this point (I write at the beginning of October), most of us are grateful for the remarkable restraint exhibited by the United States and for its efforts in putting together a world-wide coalition against terrorists and terrorist organizations. We also appreciate the willingness to make a distinction between terrorists and people of the same nationality or religion and to make efforts to ensure that, in bringing the terrorists to justice, more pain, terror and death will not rain down on defenceless women and children.

Like everyone else following September 11, my e-mail has been loaded with countless comments and suggestions of what should be done and who should do it. Barbara McLean, a deputy clerk of our church, passed on one of the most poignant of these. It comes from the International Women's Tribune Centre (IWCT) in New York City. IWCT began following the International Women's Year Tribune in Mexico City in 1975. It is a communications and technical support service for more than 16,000 women and women's groups in 160 countries. Messages in response to the September 11 attack flooded into its office from women around the world. Listen to a few of them.

"While we once again announce our solidarity and deep sorrow with the people of the United States, we also believe that attacking Afghanistan and killing its most ruined and destitute people will not in any way decrease the grief of the American people." — *Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan*

"Declaring a war against terrorism will not bring peace and security. We need to stop the war against the planet and the people. We need to work for the recovery of democracy and ecological security." — *Vandana Shiva, India*

"We have been overwhelmed by the attacks in the U.S.A. Timorese women responded by putting flowers and candles outside the U.S. mission. But the Timorese never called for Jakarta to be bombed when their whole country was destroyed (by Indonesian forces) two years ago." — *Janet Hunt, Dili, East Timor*

"We have lived through war. We know what it is like to be attacked, to grieve and to feel anger. We understand that the urge for revenge is strong. And we know that it must not be given in to. We know that a violent response can only bring more violence not justice. Instead, it kills more innocent victims and gives birth to new holy avengers.... Terrorists are not nations. And nations must not act like terrorists." — *Medica Mondiale Kosovo, Women's Center*

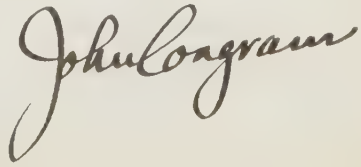
"So long as poverty and hunger, injustice and exploitation are the experience of many people in many countries, genuine despair will lead to hatred of the superpowers whose policies are seen to contribute to them, and will be used to legitimate terrorism." — *Women in Black, London, England*

"Women of Kuwait also condemn the terrorism that we are sure is not related to Islam. However, we do not agree with retaliation where victims always include many women and children. We should all support the fight against terrorism and support the war against terrorists based on justice and fair and wise actions." — *Fatima Al-Abdali, Kuwait*

"We firmly believe that it is the role of legal institutions, such as the International Criminal Court, to hold accountable those individuals responsible and bring them to justice. Our hopes lie in working to end injustice and oppression, in building positive co-operative relationships among all people. In short, in creating a global culture of peace." — *Voice of Women for Peace, Canada*

"Those responsible must be brought to justice. Ultimately, peace and security cannot come through military power alone, but must be borne of thoughtful, determined diplomacy and negotiation." — *Women's Action for New Directions, U.S.A.*

Listening to these voices makes one wish more women were in places of power and decision-making in the world.



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The risk of empowering the laity (#4 in the series) • A modest proposal for Advent • The unlikely community: a look at the traditional nativity scene • and other gifts to unwrap

our cover

Terrorism has not extinguished the flame of freedom and hope. But the flame is more fragile. It is in our hands to respond in ways that will ensure it will burn brightly for future generations.

Courage

Were I more courageous, I should be writing to the editor of the Belfast *Telegraph*, expressing the hope that his countrymen might learn the truth of words written by Hugh MacLennan: "All hatred is self-hatred."

Had I been more fearless at a prayer service last evening when the leader invited such prayers as people felt suitable, I should have suggested that each of us pray the words of the publican in a parable told by a Jewish rabbi: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

To the man about to pick up a copy of this morning's Buffalo *News*, who pointed to the headline and said to me, "It's payback time," I wish I had been brave enough to ask, "Who is to be paid, and what is the amount owing?"

What happened on September 11 in Washington, New York City and somewhere south of Pittsburgh were magnifications of what took place a few days earlier in Belfast when schoolchildren were threatened by people unable to shed age-long prejudices.

I wish I had reminded the man at the newspaper box of some lines by Longfellow in his introduction to *The Song of Hiawatha*:

"Ye … Who have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe, that in all ages
Every human heart is human … "

Too many of us "church folk," in most branches of the church, have neglected the task of being the "conscience of the state," of declaring that nations as well as individuals are responsible to a Deity who must be taken seriously. We ought to have spoken out on behalf of oppressed people, asserting in the strongest possible terms that the earth is the Lord's — and we are not proprietors, but caretakers.

We should have stated without fear or favour that people in Palestine, Cuba, Iraq and Afghanistan are as important as we are.

Abraham Lincoln said the most effective method of destroying an enemy is by turning that enemy into a friend. That truth applies to nations as well as to people. "Love your neighbour" is a law we break at our own peril.

Oh, and I should have signed that letter to the Belfast *Telegraph* as,

A catholic presbyterian sinner,
Walter A. Donovan,
Tonawanda, N.Y.

Shorter letters are more likely to be published and less likely to be edited

Retaliation or revenge?

As I listen to the daily news about an ever-increasing crescendo calling for retaliation, maybe we should call it revenge. I was reminded of the book *Seeing Through the Visible World* by June Singer (of liberal Jewish background). The key sentence is: "Too much attention is paid to relieving our own suffering, and not enough to discovering the cause of all suffering."

I don't believe there is any excuse for the barbaric acts of September 11. But by neglecting any attempt to understand what may prompt people (who have a widespread group of sympathizers) to such actions, we will not resolve anything.

What can, what must Christians do? How credible is Christianity if the only country in the world that prints "In God We Trust" on its money finds it necessary to engage in retaliatory action that will result in untold cases of "collateral damage"?

Frankly, I am afraid of what lies ahead.

Dieter S. Leidel,
Barrie, Ont.

Anti-American

Over the past year or so, many articles in the *Record* have been anti-American. Whether the topic is globalization, free trade, health care, capitalism, the World Bank/International Monetary Fund or the Quebec summit, the underlying, hateful thrust is against the United States.

Religious fanatics who carry out terrorist acts on innocents are extremists. But they are only separated by degree from those who espouse violent demonstrations or, by their presence, give violence tacit support. The attitudes are

Pontius' Puddle



identical. While they may be, as the *Economist* describes, "dunces parading their ignorance in the streets," they have the intellectual support of many anti-capitalist (capitalism did defeat communism), anti-American writers in the *Record*. Many of these are Presbyterian Church leaders. Why spend so much energy criticizing another country when we are so flawed?

Not only was the evil of September 11th a human tragedy, it was also a transforming event. Those who have not spoken out against biased and, in many cases, envious, uninformed and untrue diatribes will do so now. The United States represents personal freedom, which is why so many from all around the world want to live there. The United States empowers the individual, is hugely generous and defends our values including the right to worship as we please. Many of us have family, friends, colleagues and former comrades-in-arms who are proud U.S. citizens. We share their love of country and appreciate what they have done for us.

It is a new world. Please stop publishing hateful, prejudicial tracts.

Colin Currie,
Toronto

National Day of Mourning

The National Day of Mourning held on the grounds of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa on September 14 provided a wonderful opportunity for the 100,000 people who attended to receive something worthwhile to take home. But there was not one prayer for the families and friends of the victims. Not one prayer for hope, comfort, help, affirmation and protection. No prayer to allay our fears. No prayer to ask for wisdom and guidance, nor even thanks. NOT ONE PRAYER. What a terrible pity. With the exception of the music, I'm sure those 100,000 people felt as if they went away with nothing. Someone should have offered prayers to God.

I thought this was to be a memorial service to remember Canadians, Americans and others who lost their lives in the tragic event on September 11, not an opportunity for political rhetoric. This National Day of Mourning was sadly misplaced. It did not represent me.

Jeannine Gleeson,
Victoria

I was a teenager 61 years ago when Pearl Harbour was attacked. I still remember how beautiful and peaceful Ottawa was on that cold, sunny December Sunday morning.

When Canada answered the call to defend the cause of freedom, our military leaders and heads of state were on their knees, calling upon God to deliver their people. A national day of prayer was declared on more than one occasion. I am persuaded God answered that call.

Similarly, a day of prayer was called when peace was restored. Churches were filled with thankful people praising God.

It was gratifying to see so much support expressed at the Service of Remembrance that took place on September 14 on Parliament Hill. But I pray that our leaders will consider again and not be ashamed to mention God's name. Have we forgotten we will be called upon to give an account?

Jean E. Burt,
Nepean, Ont.

Sacred work

Thanks for the article "The myth of secular work" (September *Record*). It was great to receive a so clearly articulated view of work as something sacred, devoted to God.

It reminded me of times when people have spoken to me about my work as a pastor. Sometimes, they comment, "Well, you don't do it for the money, do you." And that's true. I do not do it for the money but because it is what God has wired me to do in my life. I hope they don't do whatever they do for the money either. I hope they do it because that's what God has given to them. If we only work for the money, we will miss out on a lot!

Bruce Cairnie,
Langley, B.C.

Misses the point?

I think Tony Plomp misses the real question in his September column ("Laity and the life of the church").

Mountains

of much-needed clothing and footwear are donated to the Hall each Christmas. While we sometimes wish it could be spread out a little more evenly over the year, we are grateful and do our best to sort piles that can reach as high as the ceiling. She had been a frequent participant in the women's program for years and noticed our dilemma in the Thrift Shop. Since then, she has come almost every morning, helping in every way she can. She's proud to tell her friends about her wonderful new job.

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letters

continued

We are learning more and new things about the ministry of the laity. Laypeople do have a share in the ministry of the church, and part of that ministry is the worship service. During the summer months, laypeople often take part in the worship service while the minister is on vacation; this includes the sermon. The laity sometimes come at subjects from a different angle than clergy. That may be because of the layperson's background in communication skills and theory. Many members speak regularly in public, so why not in church?

Members of the congregation come from many workplaces and positions. Schoolteachers, who deal with children every day, may bring a special gift to the church in the sermon. With cars being a powerful symbol in our society, perhaps a mechanic can bring a special ministry through his dealings with people. A homemaker, lawyer, clerk, salesperson, retiree — the list is endless of those who can offer ministry through a sermon.

Let's hear it for the laity! Amen!

Larry Ellis,
Manotick, Ont.

Praise

Thank you for the September issue of the *Record*. I could not put it down. Every page is worth its weight in gold. A priceless issue.

Margaret Gentle,
Burlington, Ont.

Knock

Beside the door the drift of leaves
protects a furry refugee.

Her pale tender tail curves.
The dainty nervous paws observe

a silence in their careful search
for food within her hidden perch.

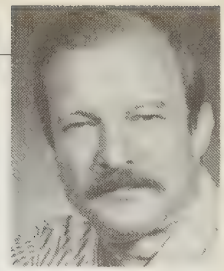
Her little blinking heart and winking
whiskers work around a seed

the way I work around a prayer
when I would never dare to knock

but might be waiting timid there
in leaves and sighs beside the door.

— Wendy Turner Swanson

Joe Reed



A lesson from the Third World

Nicaraguans challenge Canadian Presbyterians to be more tolerant

The horses strutted up the street, their hooves raising clouds of dust. A caravan of vehicles followed slowly: battered farm pickups and luxury Land Cruisers in roughly equal numbers. The kick-off to this year's presidential campaign in rural Nicaragua.

A strange conglomeration, not only of cars but also of politicians. Left-leaning candidates, stumbling heirs to the revolution, together with former members of the National Guard who had once served the right-wing dictatorship. These people or their ancestors, once locked in deadly combat, had tortured and killed each other for decades. They brought histories of torture, summary executions, political verbiage, clandestine prisons and cemeteries. And they brought it all to the same platform — flags of the revolutionaries interspersed with flags of the National Guard and flags of those who took up guns and planted landmines to topple both.

I never expected to hear these words: "There is room in this country for all of us. There is room for the National Guard. There is room for the revolutionary. There is room for the contras." To hear a revolutionary proclaim that there is room in the country for the National Guard, well, that truly is revolutionary.

If politics makes strange bedfellows, this year's presidential election is no exception. And, of course, campaigns everywhere bring out the rhetoric and the pretty dialogues. But something has changed, and that something inspires a great hope.

No one doubts Nicaraguans will vote in November and those elections, while probably marred by isolated irregularities, will be more or less fair. Many lament the dearth of honest politicians and alternative visions and dreams, but the vote will happen. There may not be much to choose, but the freedom to choose is an enormous advance. People have worked hard for this — people from the left and from the right who love their country. These people may not like each other but they have agreed, for this election at least, to bury the hatchet.

Which brings me to the church we love and serve. In some ways, I think we, too, have learned to be more tolerant. More and more of us come from different cultural communities. We worship in a rich diversity of languages. Like our land, our church has been woven from a wide variety of backgrounds, languages and cultures. What an amazing tapestry!

Many of our congregations — not all, by any means, and not enthusiastically enough — try to welcome the youth. We have finally discovered our children are not the church of the future but the church of today. That is good.

Indeed, I stand in a Nicaraguan village today surrounded by Canadian youth. They hail from one of our congregations whose passion for mission has led them to support their kids. Mission Education and Youth in Mission have a program to provide exposure tours and work experiences for Presbyterian youth and adults. We await visitors with open arms. No need to go beyond our church to savour such good experiences.

We may not like the paper it's printed on or the size of the type, but most of us have embraced even the new hymn-book with — might I say — "grudging enthusiasm." This is good, too.

Nicaraguans challenge us, I think, to greater tolerance of theological diversity. I sense a certain hardening of positions and even an incipient intolerance across the church.

A great Nicaraguan poet wrote, "If the country is small, you have to dream that it is big." That is true of our church

A great Nicaraguan poet wrote, "If the country is small, you have to dream that it is big." That is true of our church. We may not be large, but our vision looms enormous. We grow in our diversity of age, race, culture and language. Let us also grow in tolerance. Room abounds for all who love Christ and the vision to which he invites us.



Moderator's itinerary

November 4
50th anniversary
Armour Heights, Toronto

November 11
St. Giles, St. Catharines, Ont. (morning)
North Bramalea, Bramalea, Ont. (evening)

November 14
Knox College, Toronto (afternoon)
Zion, Sunnidale Corners, Ont. (evening)

November 15
Presbytery of Niagara

November 18
160th anniversary
St. Andrew's, Sarnia, Ont.

December 2
Église St-Luc, Montreal

KNOX COLLEGE COMING EVENTS

THE ROBERT LAIDLAW LECTURES
with Professor Peter Paris
"The Search for Justice in a Global Community"
Wednesday, November 7
2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
Thursday, November 8
4:00 p.m.
In addition to teaching and writing, Dr. Paris, a Canadian who is an ordained Baptist minister, serves on the Princeton Affordable Housing Commission and is President of the Board of Trustees of the Princeton Young Achievers, a member of the Board of Trustees of New York Theological Seminary and of the Baptist Union of the University of Chicago Divinity School.

MILLENNIUM QUILTING EXHIBIT
Monday, November 12 — Friday, December 7
An exhibit of quilts made by women of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to celebrate the 125th anniversary of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Millennium, and the Jubilee Initiative of the World Council of Churches.

CAVEN LIBRARY OPEN HOUSE
Monday, November 26
4:30 p.m. — 6:00 p.m.
Come and celebrate! The library has new chairs, a new carpet and new lights. Come and see the new look.

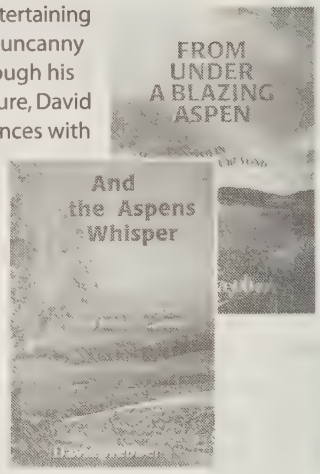
KNOX COLLEGE CHOIR CHRISTMAS CONCERT
Wednesday, December 5
8:00 p.m.
An evening of Christmas music with the Knox College Choir, under the direction of Dr. John Derksen. Reception to follow.

"CONSIDER MINISTRY 2002"
Saturday, January 26, 2002
9:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.
If you believe that you may have a call to Ministry within The Presbyterian Church in Canada, here is an opportunity to explore that call. Discover the challenge of Ministry today through conversations with Knox faculty members and students.

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— Jay Bulloch
(Editor/Publisher
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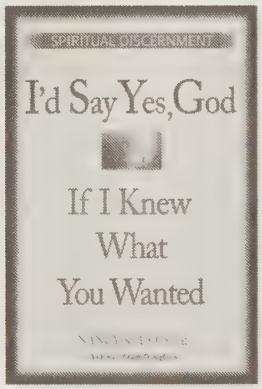
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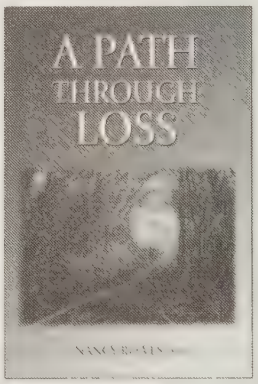
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George Gamester

Jock Anderson

Missing those he laid to rest

On the morning *after* Remembrance Day … Bugles are silent. Poppies discarded. And our world returns to now. Still, Jock Anderson remembers. Today and every day, Jock cannot forget. All the lads. Those golden boys he laid to rest in all those graves.

Gazing out over the blue-grey chop of Lake Ontario from his Oakville home, Jock sees them still. "Time is nothing," he reflects. "Nights when I can't sleep, I see them all so clearly." Names. Faces. Laughter. Tears. Deaths.

Take us with you, Jock. We want to see and hear. The stories behind the names and faces in your album of memories … Who's that first one, Jock? The blond, handsome fellow who resembles a young Bob Hope without the funny nose?

"Why, that's *me*. They used to call me Bob Hope's brother, and a lot of other things, too."

Yes, you were a comedian, Jock. At least, that's what they thought at the University Avenue Armouries that fall day in 1939 when you rushed down from Knox College to enlist with the 48th Highlanders.

"A *theology* student!" the recruiters hooted. "Go back to school, lad. If it's a long war, we'll need you later."

Well, it was a long war. So when you left your church in Port Elgin to join up after the debacle at Dieppe, they were glad to have you. And, being a Scots-born Presbyterian, they knew just where to send you: the Highland Light Infantry of Canada.

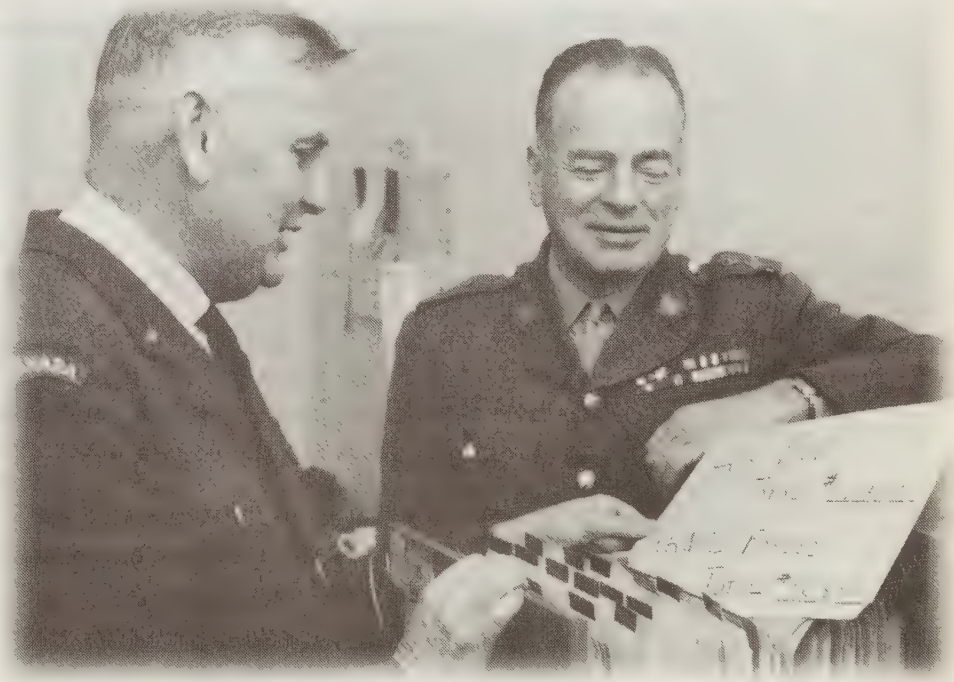
Oh, it was a grand outfit, the HLI. Lots of Scottish and Old Ontario heritage there from Waterloo County. The cream of youth from Kitchener and Galt with a fighting tradition going back to the War of 1812 and the bloody First World War battles of the Somme, Ypres and Passchendaele.

Tell us about Doug and Peter, Padre, the Kennedy brothers from Galt.

"Doug Kennedy was a company commander. A fine young man with sensitivity and a lively sense of humour. He and Peter were very close."

Boulogne, September 17, 1944: The HLI is on the attack. But Major Douglas Kennedy is not with them. He's enjoying a brief leave in the liberated town of Deauville.

WHUMP! Near Boulogne, fragments from a German 88-millimetre shell find a victim. Major Peter Kennedy from brigade headquarters is killed instantly. Padre Jock, as he has so many times before, retrieves the body and wraps it in a blanket. He will hold off the burial until Peter's brother can be found.



Jock Anderson (right) with J. N. Bracher discuss the $36,835 raised by women of the Protestant chapels of the Canadian Armed Forces in 1967 to equip the new surgery of the children's wing in Vellore Hospital, India.

That night, Jock spots Doug Kennedy approaching his front-line aid station. "I'm so sorry about Peter," he says.

"What do you mean?" asks Doug. He had returned early from leave to be with his men, unaware of his brother's death.

Within hours, they bury Peter. "No, I want you to go back to Deauville and finish your leave," Jock tells Doug. "Don't do anything foolish. Think of Patricia back home, and your parents."

Next day, while giving comfort to the wounded in the thick of house-to-house fighting in Boulogne, the padre sees an officer lying in the street, shot through the chest by a sniper. Douglas Kennedy.

Summer Experience

A Leadership Development program for Youth and Young Adults run by the Synod of Southwestern Ontario is searching for a:

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If you feel God's call to this position, send your résumé by November 17, 2001, to:

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"'Oh, Doug,' I said. 'How *could* you?' He was still alive. We carried him into a shop. He and I said a little prayer together, and he was gone."

Gone like so many others. The McDonald brothers from Crieff. Big, husky farm boys, they were. Dixie and Johnny. Both company sergeant-majors.

And the three Francis boys from Galt. After Bert and Benny were killed, the seriously wounded Roy was determined to pay back the Jerries, single-handed. Jock went to headquarters, pleaded with the colonel — and Roy was ordered back to England.

Strange, how some of them seemed to know …

"Vin Stark. One of our finest officers. We were out for a walk one day when he told me: 'You know, Padre, I'm not coming out of this alive. But I don't mind. I'm not married. I know my family will be upset but they'll get over it.' A few days later, he led an attack at Buron and the Jerries got him."

It's 56 years now, but Jock still feels an emotional jolt when he thinks of Vin. And Bruce.

Bruce Zimmerman, one of many from Kitchener with Germanic names who fought so well for Canada. Enlisting as a trooper, he was sent to officer training school and returned as a lieutenant — perhaps the most dangerous rank in combat. After crossing the Rhine, Bruce and Jock find themselves in adjacent slit trenches.

"Padre, did I tell you I got married when I was home?"

"Why, that's wonderful, Bruce. Congratulations."

"Thank you. Now there's something else."

"What is it, Bruce?"

"This is my first battle. And I believe it will be my last. If I don't make it, I want you to take my wedding ring and get it back to my wife."

A few hours later, a grim-faced Jock Anderson gently removes a gold band from a dead man's stiffened finger. In time, he would return it to a heart-broken Juliana Zimmerman in Kitchener. Bruce died on March 26, 1945. Six weeks later, the war in Europe would be over.

Terrible, these memories. And none worse for Jock than his recollections of Gordon Sim. "He was a schoolteacher from Galt. A fine gentleman, well-respected. Gordie had his squeeze-box, you know, an accordion. When we had a break, he would lead us in sing-songs."

One day, after he'd become adjutant, Gordie takes the padre aside. "Jock," he says, "I have a feeling my time is up. When it happens, I want you to promise me something. I want you to get a piper for the burial. And I want him to play my favourite tune: 'Mist Covered Mountain.'"

Days later, near Boulogne, Major G. D. Sim is cut down by enemy fire. Jock retrieves the body and organizes a slow-march procession and burial in an open field during a lull. Only later does he learn that he and other members of Gordie's company were all in the enemy's gunsights as the pipe major played "Mist Covered Mountain."

"Och! They could have mowed us down." He smiles. "But they didn't. Strange business, war."

Very strange. Where a man of God, who never carried a weapon or looked on anyone with hatred could be counted among the bravest of them all. Oh, yes. Check the battle citations, and you'll find Hon. Capt. John MacMorran Anderson was twice awarded the Military Cross for "calm, steadfast gallantry." And "cheerful courage." "Saving the lives of many men by repeated trips through heavy fire." "An inspiration to all ranks."

But the only padre to serve continuously with a frontline infantry battalion from D-Day through VE-Day doesn't care to talk about his medals. Today, watching the gulls wheel over the lake, this kindly 87-year-old grandfather and widower prefers to think of Gordie. And Doug. And Charlie. And all the others he buried in those orchards, fields, dikes and forests.

He misses them. And firmly believes he will see them again. Perhaps soon for, "if you believe, any day is a good day to die."

Meanwhile, he remembers.

Bless you, Padre. R

George Gamester writes a column celebrating the extraordinary lives of "ordinary" people for the *Toronto Star*. This article was reprinted with the permission of the author.

pastoral epistles from peter plymley II

My dear editor:

This being my first epistle since the terrorist attack on September 11, I am faced with the difficulty of finding something funny, or at least mildly bemusing, to say against that background. Humour is a big enough challenge at the best of times, given that "jocularity" and "Presbyterian" are not words normally held in association. Some of us have been waiting to laugh since the Reformation.

Can death and humour have anything to do with each other? Perhaps, in individual instances.

Oscar Wilde, dying in a cheap rooming house in France, was purported to have remarked (though it may be apocryphal), "Either that wallpaper goes or I do." When told of the fee for the operation that might save him, he said, "Ah, well, then I suppose I shall have to die beyond my means."

Charles II apologized to his courtiers for taking "an unconscionable time dying." He hoped they would excuse it.

Samuel Johnson, accused of ghostwriting a farewell sermon for an unfortunate cleric sentenced to death — a sermon suspiciously better than anything the man had written — replied, "Depend upon it, Sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully."

Pianist, raconteur, actor and hypochondriac Oscar Levant arranged for the inscription on his tombstone: "See, I Told You I Was Sick!"

There are a multitude of such individual examples of death and laughter, death and wit. But, collectively, it is much harder to make those links.

In the two world wars of the past century, troops made up their own jokes and comic songs. I will only mention the song "We'll hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line" from WWI ... or, maybe, one more, same era, same war: "Mademoiselle from Armentières."

In the vast amount of literature from the Second World War, Spike Milligan's (he of *The Goon Show*) multivolume memoirs are hilarious, but also poignant and heart-breaking. He saw heavy action in North Africa and Italy and was invalided out.

The award-winning film *Life is Beautiful* attempted what many thought, and some still think, impossible (or irreverent) — the discovery of tender and even humorous moments under the pall of the Holocaust.

The war in Vietnam has, so far, produced one similar attempt to interweave humour with the horror of war — in many ways, a terrorist-type war: the film *Good Morning, Vietnam* starring Robin Williams. It has its moments.

Can death and humour have anything to do with each other?

On television, *M*A*S*H* was, especially early on, a light/heavy, funny/sad take on the Korean War. Earlier, *Hogan's Heroes* was simply dismal.

No doubt a distance from the terror is necessary. It is hard to believe there will *ever* be jokes written around or about September 11 — but there will be, whether they be tasteless or good.

It is more important to believe humour is, of necessity, irrepressible. At least among sane folk and certainly among Christians.

Can you imagine a book entitled *The Wit of Adolph Hitler* or *Laugh Along With Stalin*? Of Hitler, Albert Speer writes that his table talk was both boring and self-centred. It is hard to imagine Stalin laughing except at the success of another purge and the imposition of fresh misery on some wretched "enemies of the state." Yet, Churchill has left many examples of wit and repartee. Humourlessness seems to affect tyrants. Laughter, especially at their own expense, is unimaginable.

Scholars say the Old Testament is replete with humour as well as the blood and thunder associations that inhabit the more prosaic cast of mind — *double entendres*, puns, etc., many, unfortunately, lost in translation. The rabbinic tradition, not to speak of stand-up comedy in our day, draws heavily on wellsprings of Jewish laughter, sometimes bubbling through the most barren circumstances.

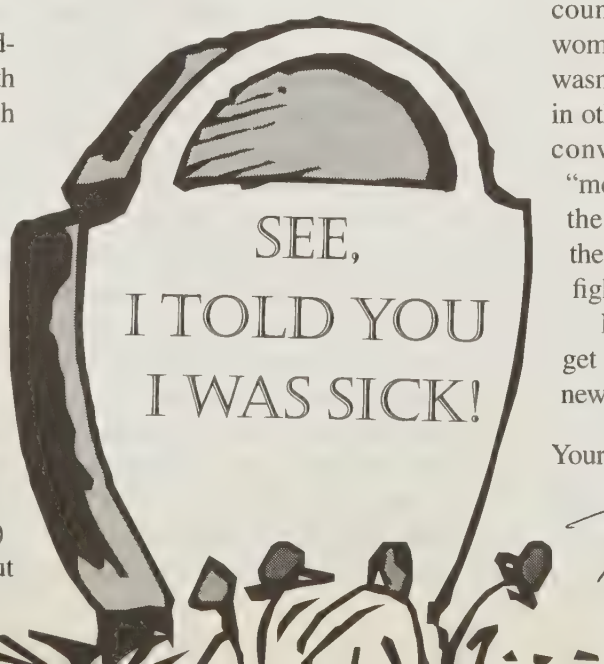
Humour is not in great evidence in the New Testament, at least in a set-up style. (There are a few instances where scholars point to jokes; but they seem forced and dated to our ears, and scholars aren't always the best guides to this kind of thing anyway.)

I think there is a case to be made for finding humour, or at least bemusement, in more than one of our Lord's encounter's (for example, the Samaritan woman at the well or the paralytic who wasn't all that anxious to be cured) and in other places, too. One especially. I am convinced that, when the angels (or "men in dazzling garments," Luke) at the tomb asked, "Why search among the dead for one who lives?" they were fighting back a smile.

It took a while for Jesus' followers to get it, to be able to laugh, too. But the news, the punch line, *was* good.

Yours soberly,

Peter Plymley II



Justice

Abe's other son

by Joseph C. McLelland

Jews and Arabs, both descendants of Abraham and recipients of God's covenants

Call me Ishmael. Melville begins his whale of a novel like this because the narrator is a relative outsider, and at last a castaway.

Now Father Abraham had two sons. The first was born to his concubine, Hagar — a legitimate procedure then; indeed, his wife arranged it — when he was getting old and thought Sarah could not produce a son and heir. Abe did this for God's sake, in order that the covenant could bear fruit through his offspring. Had not God said, "[N]umber the stars if you can … so shall your descendants be" (Genesis 15:5)?

Then Abe had a visit from three messengers ("angels," although the old theologians used to insist that the one who spoke to him was *Logos incarnandus*, the Word-to-become-incarnate). The Word announced that Sarah would now have a son despite their advanced years. The old couple, recognizing they were beyond that sort of thing, found this news so amusing they laughed heartily. And so it was, after nine months of hilarity, they named the child *Isaac*, that is, "Laughter." Sarah said, "[E]veryone who hears will laugh over me." And, indeed, the Good News is a laughing matter, a source of courage against the dark and the dread ever since. (Not that we Christians always act like children of Laughter …) Isaac's descendants became "the children of Israel" after his son Jacob-Israel.

Meanwhile, back in the wilderness, the firstborn son was having a rough time, being banished with his mother, Hagar. But God had a promise for Hagar, too: this other son would also enjoy his own kind of covenant: "I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring…. I will make him a great nation" (Genesis 21:13,18). This covenant also mentions a multitude without number, and even "twelve princes" to come. For God had named him *Ishma-el*, "God hears."

So the two half-brothers stand at the head of two Semitic races, Jews and Arabs. In time, the great religion of submission to God's will, *Islam*, came into being through Ishmael's people. (Muhammad is reckoned as Ishmael's descendant.)

How complex is human history!
Never a black-and-white, an us-and-them situation.
Never a truly "just war,"
given the long road leading to conflict

Today, only some 20 per cent of Muslims are Arabs since, in Muhammad's own lifetime, it spread both east and west, from Spain to beyond the Indus. Islam is the living symbol of God's other covenant: God hears. Father Abraham has sired three religions, three covenants: Judaism, Christianity, Islam. The Qur'an calls them "People of the Book."

The two modern inhabitants of ancient Palestine at each other's throats is a picture of irony, sibling rivalry at its worst. If only we Christians, thrust in between the two brothers as it were by the grace of the Brother of all three, Jesus the Christ — if only we could truly mediate between them! The events of September 11 — graphic and horrific images of destruction and pain — challenge our faith in the gospel of reconciliation and peacemaking. To see the world as black and white is to take Sarah's part, casting out her rival, Hagar, to keep the covenant to herself. No room for reconciliation here, no grace, no laughter. Only a rush to judgment and a seatide of anger.

How complex is human history! Never a black-and-white, an us-and-them situation. Never a truly "just war," given the long road leading to conflict. Even Hitler was able to seize power partly because of circumstances traceable through the preceding decades, including the Peace of Versailles. Thus, the cycle of violence goes on, fuelled by short memory and prejudiced folklore. It is standard policy in warfare to demonize enemies, reducing them to subhuman "barbarians" with no reason to dislike us (we're so likeable) except sheer evil.

Is the lesson of the Cross to be so easily overturned by self-righteous nations who refuse to seek out causes and mutual guilt? Can we — Canadians, Christians — not find ways of witnessing to nonviolent means in the cause of justice for all? Or do we, too, think there is only one covenant, and we are its sole benefactors? "Cast out the slave woman with her son; for he shall not be heir with mine." R

Joseph C. McLelland is emeritus professor of McGill University and The Presbyterian College, Montreal, and a contributing editor of this magazine.

for all

The heart of God

by Glynis Williams and Lynne Donovan

In response to terrorist attacks, Canada must not exclude the refugee whom God sends to bless us

Her name is Fahima. Her home is Afghanistan. She returned to her house one afternoon to discover the house and her six children had been bombed. Body parts were strewn throughout what had once been her yard.

Fahima is a woman of faith. Since that day, she has prayed daily as she fled her land seeking refuge. She lived in the slums of India for five years before being sponsored by a church to come to Canada as a refugee. As life unfolds for her in this country, she continues to be a woman of prayer.

How could a mother remain a person of faith after the slaughter of her children? A logical response would be to abandon God during times of such unfathomable sorrow. How could she ever believe again in a God of faithfulness after such devastation? But Fahima's belief in God's faithfulness did not wane. Fahima is a Muslim.

Since the events of September 11, many Christians in North America have struggled with their faith. In their sermons, ministers have wrestled in a new way with that ancient question of the faithful: "Where is God?" The more essential question is "Who is God?" The people of Israel wrestled with these same questions when they found themselves under siege, in exile, without hope. Who was this God of theirs? What did this God require of them?

The biblical tradition provides two diverse responses to this question. The first is found in the book of Ezra. After those living in exile returned and worked to put their lives back together, they also tried to make sense of what had happened to them. What was God thinking? Why had their land, their temple and their way of life been devastated by foreign armies? How could they rebuild their lives to prevent another act of devastation? How could they secure themselves against another act of aggression?

Ezra, the priest and an avid scholar of the law, was troubled by what he saw. Many male Israelites who had returned from exile had brought women and children born of that land and shaped by other cultures. Ezra perceived these women and children to be a threat to the security of his people. He was convinced the intermarriage of the Israelites in exile had contaminated the faithful. Surely God would not look upon their inclusion with favour. How could they recreate the holy city with the purity of faith God demanded when these women and their children were present? And, so, the narrative ends: "All these men had foreign wives. They divorced them and sent them and their children away" (Ezra 10:44).

Does this story accurately reflect our God? Or was the decision taken against these foreign women and children a result of human fear? In our hearts, we know such action was motivated by fear, not faith. God's loving kindness is for all people. This is confirmed by the story of another foreign woman, Ruth.

Ruth, a Moabite woman, married an Israelite man whose family had fled to Moab as environmental refugees because of a famine. All the men in the family died. Rather than returning to the security of her parents' home, Ruth insisted on returning to Judah with her mother-in-law, Naomi. In Judah, Ruth married Boaz and became the grandmother of Jesse, the father of David in whose line Jesus was born. God included this foreign woman in his plan for the world's salvation. God made Ruth a means of blessing to the nation of Israel, and to us.

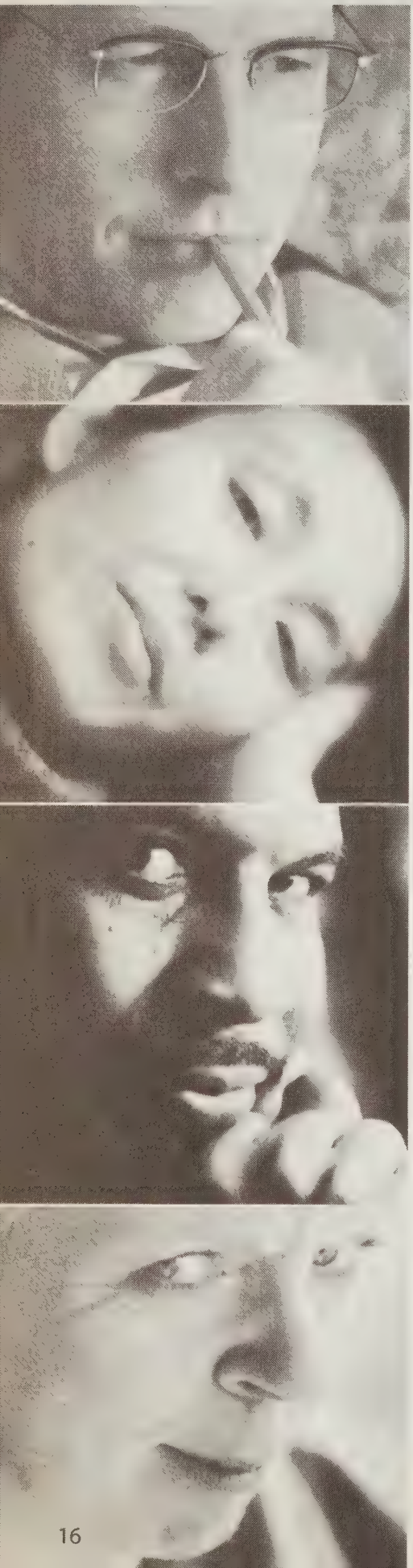
The God who plants foreign women in our midst to be a blessing is the God who must have wept at Ezra's conclusion that Israel must be stripped of its foreign wives and children in order to remain in God's favour. Clearly, Ezra misread the heart of God. And, therefore, his response was neither faithful nor just. Dare we make the same mistake?

Some feel the events of September 11 have plunged us into the heart of darkness. Others like Fahima, who has been visited by such darkness before, would suggest this event begs us to plunge ourselves into the heart of God. And, in that place, we will discover the Holy One who weeps still and who pleads as only a parent can: "Enough! Stop the killing!"

If we dare to stand with this God, we will oppose religious stereotyping that labels Islam as a faith that promotes violence. We will oppose a military response that will inevitably kill the most vulnerable and the most innocent. We will oppose the kinds of security measures that will allow for the suspension of fundamental human rights for certain ethnic groups. We will oppose the calls to close our borders to asylum seekers. Biblical history reminds us God places those of other faiths and other lands in our midst as a means to bless us. Let us not allow tears for ourselves and for those who mourn to blur our vision of God. R

Glynis Williams and Lynne Donovan are ministers of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Glynis is director of Action Réfugiés Montreal.

Theologians have no better access to God



Laity and ministry: Where do we fit in?

Reality as it exists today in The Presbyterian Church in Canada

by Jan Hazlett

Is there any connection between Sunday and Monday?

Is there mutual respect between clergy and laity? (Do we value lay and ordained ministries equally?)

These are the questions raised by a year-long study of lay ministry in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The 200 responses from 40 congregations to a Canada-wide survey, as well as a host of personal interviews and e-mail responses, point to confusion about what "ministry" actually is. Some Presbyterians say ministry is what takes place on Sunday.

There also appears to be confusion about the roles of laity and clergy within the life and work of the congregation. "I am only a layperson. I wouldn't know how to pray out loud." That is the response from a middle-aged woman, a leader in her congregation and a professional teacher. How could she be afraid, not to speak in public but to pray in public?

Ordained ministers express frustration that they put time and effort into preaching and worship to help the congregation grow in faith but end up carrying more and more responsibility themselves. Laypeople say they feel unable to articulate their faith and to pray in the "right language" so they leave it to the minister. They expect clergy to conduct worship services professionally.

Laypeople also express the view that there isn't a natural, nurturing partnership between the minister and lay leaders. Some said: "We are seen as assistants to the big picture of the minister's vision." "Clergy and laity need to respect each other." "In the past, too much has been undertaken by clergy and elders; members are cast in a passive mode." There is a need to develop new ways to support ordained ministers and congregations in developing models of ministry that allow all to use their gifts and to respect the gifts of others.

If there is a feeling of disconnectedness when it comes to Sunday worship, there is even a larger gap between Sunday worship and the rest of the week. Most participating in the survey see little connection between Sunday worship and what they do outside the church. They don't see themselves as engaging in "ministry" when they interact with others on the job. They don't feel equipped to share their faith when they are at work. Faith is considered to be a personal matter, not appropriate for discussion in a multicultural, multifaith context.

than do farmers and waitresses. — ***Richard Mouw***

The overwhelming impression of those engaged in the study was that of discouragement. Some wrote of their struggles in detail. Often these were implied through wry comments. Leaders expressed feelings of inadequacy and frustration with their inability to access necessary resources. They feel burned out and betrayed when others do not share the work-load. And they live with guilt and a sense of failure when they see declining church attendance or enrolment in Sunday school.

Many congregations are struggling to survive. This is nothing new. The denomination has been struggling with the reality of declining membership for several years. The toll this takes is enormous, both in terms of discouragement of all involved and in terms of the ministry. One person said: "[Our congregation] must struggle every day to meet its finan-

Calling all paid laypeople

Jeff has been a full-time Christian education director for three years. He is enthusiastic about his job and the programs he has developed at his church. However, he is increasingly aware of his own limitations. He does not have specific training in Christian education despite having a vibrant and mature faith. When he asked about training, he was told no monies were available for him to take courses in theological education. He would have to pay for the courses himself and do this training around his work hours or during his two-week vacation. He was clearly frustrated with this response.

Jane has been employed as a part-time administrator in her congregation. She has a secretarial background and is glad to put her skills to use. Despite her enthusiasm, however, she has concerns. When she considers her salary, it is much less than other people with her qualifications would even consider, and she receives no benefits. She is unsure if she will be able to secure another part-time job that works around the hours she is required at the church. She feels embarrassed about approaching the personnel committee about this issue. If her husband remains unemployed, she may have to take on a full-time job elsewhere to support her family and give up what she feels called to do to support her family.

Lynne serves as a part-time youth worker and feels called to this ministry. She loves working with teens and challenging them to grow in their faith. Unfortunately, the most recent youth materials in the church library are from the 1970s, and Lynne knows the teens will not warm up to those pictures or approaches. She has some resources at home but does not know what else is available. With a minimal budget for materials, she hopes to share ideas and resources with others in similar jobs. Unfortunately, she does not know any other Presbyterian churches that have hired youth workers.

Ephesians 4:11-13 and I Corinthians 12:4-11, 28 speak of the different gifts God gives his people to build up the Body of Christ in faith and maturity. Many congregations in The Presbyterian Church in Canada hire laypeople to carry out specific ministries that might not otherwise receive enough support. These people represent a variety of life experiences and educational backgrounds. Their positions include: youth workers, Christian education directors, administrators, secretaries, pastoral care workers, parish nurses, organists, music directors and custodians. Lay employees fill significant roles as they use their unique gifts. Because their call differs from ordained ministry, many issues arise such as those faced by Jeff, Jane and Lynne.

The wage, vacation time and benefits lay employees receive are often bare minimum. We sometimes operate with a faulty theology when we pay people in the church. Phrases like "If you love God, it shouldn't matter how much you are paid," or "We don't have the money in the budget," and "We can't ask the congregation for more than they're already giving" indicate a mind-set of sacrifice on the part of the employee and not of the congregation.

There is an unwillingness to look at creative solutions. Budgets reflect what and whom we value as congregations. The Acts and Proceedings outlines a wage scale to be followed by all congregations in hiring Ministers of Word and Sacraments and laypeople. Paying people as little as possible is nothing to be proud of. Our focus ought to be on seeing what will be gained by paying people what is just and fair for their efforts that directly benefit the congregation.

Many other things can be done to help hired laypeople minister to their full potential. Making them aware of synod staff, other resource people and those nearby who are doing a similar job allows for networking. Investing in their training and additional resources will have long-term benefits for them and for the congregation. Unlike Ministers of Word and Sacraments, they are not members of presbytery; therefore, they have a voice only within the congregation that hired them. Providing support people who will serve as advocates and a listening ear will demonstrate that you care about their needs.

All members of the church are called to serve Christ, whether clergy or laity, paid or volunteer. As we seek to build up the Body of Christ to the glory of God, may we truly honour every part and offer each other respect.

Anne Miller, who lives in Woodstock, Ont., serves on the support committee for Jan Hazlett, national lay ministry consultant.

cial obligations and tends to see the objective of ministry in and outside the church as being to increase our numbers and spread out the burden." Another writes: "Ministry, as sharing God's love with a lost and hurting world, cannot be done without sufficient financial resources to maintain the institution." These comments indicate their difficulty in seeing where God is working and how they can move forward as a church.

A need to hear each other's struggles in living out their calling is evident. People are struggling with the concept of success in this time of declining worship attendance. Two comments were particularly revealing: "There is so much more we could do with better communication and support networks" and "We need encouragement to persevere and assurance that small contributions can make a big difference." Many people feel they received encouragement when they first began in a particular ministry such as teaching Sunday school; but, once they were in it, they no longer felt supported. Many described Sunday school teaching as a thankless task.

When asked about the biggest challenge for the congregation, many replied it was "to be patient with the youth and children in the programs of the church." It is part of the church's struggle for survival. With attendance declining, the faithful remnant is trying to keep the institution afloat.

There were repeated comments from men and women feeling unqualified for their tasks within the church. They perform them simply because there isn't anyone else. They are also often asked to undertake more than they feel capable of doing. This demonstrates a need for congregations to assess their strengths and to determine intentionally what programs and ministries they are able to maintain faithfully. That means discovering individual gifts, then using them — matching gifted people to the appropriate tasks and providing ongoing support in the way of resources, specific training needs and encouragement. A congregation with reduced and limited human resources may not be able to continue to offer all the programs they had in the past. Accept the fact some programs may have to be discontinued.

The majority of those in leadership positions could articulate that they felt God had called them to specific positions within the church. However, few felt called to minister outside the congregation. By our actions within congregations, are we attaching a higher value to certain ministries? By our language and our commissioning services for special ministries, are we elevating them above the rest? Do we consider that the call to Ministry of Word and Sacraments is somehow higher and better than the call to live out ministry as a teacher, a custodian, a business person or a homemaker?

There is also a noticeable shift in the role of the young in the church. Rather than a shift away from attempting to entertain young people until they are old enough to appreciate church, there is a move to hiring youth workers to provide quality ministry. A growing number of congregations are looking for Presbyterian youth workers. Recognizing that this ministry takes special gifts not necessarily required for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments, congregations are also looking for "Reformed" youth ministry training. Evidence of this is that 69 men and women took part in the youth ministry training track at Canada Youth 2000.

Several other denominations and organizations around the world are recognizing the need to "empower the laity." Numerous programs have been tried with varying degrees of success. Our church can benefit from the experience of others by adapting some of these programs for our congregations. R

The survey results express both hope and frustration. The personal stories of struggle and success have been encouraging to me. These results are not statistics; they are the stories of Presbyterian laypeople living out their calling. It is my hope that we will use these results to reflect earnestly on our practice with a view to living out our calling as Christians more faithfully.

— Jan Hazlett

Jan Hazlett began a two-year contract as lay ministry consultant for The Presbyterian Church in Canada in September 1999. She is a teacher, youth minister and a Christian educator. She devoted the first year to information gathering.

For further reflection and discussion

1. By our actions, do we give more value to some ministries/programs/individuals than to others?
2. Why should we equip laypeople?
3. How can we support people who minister through their occupations or places in their communities?
4. In what ways could we show more support to those who carry out various ministries within the congregation?
5. What message are we conveying to our community?

Resources

For ground work

"A Partnership of Trust: Clergy Laity Dialogues" by Jean Haldane and Hollis Williams in *Congregations* magazine, September/October 1999, The Alban Institute.

For a model for paid lay workers

Association of Presbyterian Church Educators: http://www.APCEnet.org

Uniting Church in Australia: http://nat.uca.org.au

For general encouragement

The Christian Reformed Church in Canada plans an annual "Day of Encouragement." Contact: Diaconal Ministries in Eastern Canada, 3475 Mainway Dr., PO Box 5070, Stn. LCD 1, Burlington, Ont. L7R 3Y8.

For integrating faith in daily life

The Anglican Diocese of Ontario has a School of Lay Ministry. For information, contact: Lisa Chisholm-Smith, director, chismith@ontario.anglican.ca, or write to the Diocese of Ontario, 90 Johnson St., Kingston, Ont. K7L 1X7.

For a lay certificate program

Contact: Lay Studies in Theology program at Huron College, London, Ontario.

For an educational opportunity for laity

The Certificate Program in Christian Faith and Life at Knox College, 59 St. George St., Toronto, Ont. M5S 2E6; 416-978-4503; knox.college@utoronto.ca.

A tale of two churches

by Jean Sonnenfeld

Before Rosedale Church built its own sanctuary, it built a church in China

How does a group of Christians organize a new congregation where none exists? Usually, people start by coming together somewhere for regular worship services. Then, they organize a church school and set up a building fund. Rosedale Church, Toronto, went through these stages in 1907 — but with one major difference. When the congregation was ready to build, it built a church in China.

Why China? The statement of session in Rosedale's 1908 annual report contains the answer: "Notwithstanding the heavy claims on the congregation for church building, we have tried not to lose sight of the larger work of the church." The newly organized Rosedale congregation had been moved by an urgent appeal from the mission in Henan (Honan), China, at that time a mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, "for a church building at a strategic point." The congregation sent $3,000 to China, $2,900 from the church fund and $100 from the Sabbath school.

Perhaps it was providential that Dr. Andrew Grant, a medical doctor and a Presbyterian minister, lived in the Rosedale district. Grant had already done pioneering work as the first Presbyterian missionary to the Yukon, where he had founded the Good Samaritan Hospital in Dawson City during the gold rush of the 1890s. Returning to Toronto, he became general superintendent of home missions for the national church. As a founding member of Rosedale, he set up a general committee to organize the new congregation. But Grant was also instrumental in keeping Rosedale informed of "the larger work," including the need for a church in Henan.

The missionaries in Henan decided that Wei-hwei, located in the centre of North Henan province, at the crossroads of the recently built railroad and the Wei River (with all its floating traffic), was the "strategic point" where the church should be built. It was to be a large church, with a vaulted ceiling made of Douglas fir from British Columbia.

The minutes of Henan Presbytery record "its grateful appreciation of the generous gift … from Rosedale Church



Rosedale Church, Wei-hwei, Henan, China, built by funds contributed by Rosedale Church, Toronto.

congregation, who, before erecting their own place of worship, unselfishly gave a church for their Chinese brothers and sisters." Missionaries returning to Canada from China occasionally brought news of Wei-hwei and the mission at Henan. The first five annual reports of Rosedale Church include pictures of Wei-hwei Church.

During the first half of the 20th century, war and anti-foreign violence in China made regular contact with Wei-hwei difficult. Forced to flee China when war with Japan broke out, the missionaries found their way barred by the Communists when they tried to return after the war. The Communist government put an end to denominations, permitting only one Protestant Church and one Roman Catholic Church. Wei-hwei Church is, today, a part of that unified Protestant Church called The Three-Self Movement. The three selfs — self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating — had long been the goal of the churches in China. When the Communists cut off all foreign support, they provided the catalyst that forced Chinese churches to become what they wanted to be, as embodied in The Three-Self Movement.

If you go to Wei-hwei today, and Christians there find out you are Canadian, they will direct you to the well-equipped hospital with its entirely Chinese staff. This is the same hospital built by Canadian missionaries nearly a century ago, along with the church and a school. The church is now located in a different part of the city where the congregation continues to worship despite China's upheavals and changes.

In Toronto, Rosedale Church still tries not to lose sight of the larger work of the church. In 1909, the congregation was giving financial assistance to 14 special projects at home and overseas while raising money for its own building fund. Ninety-two years later, motivated by the spirit of Grant and the other founding members, the congregation still contributes time and money to several projects. And, yes, Rosedale Church has been worshipping in a building of its own since 1910. R

Jean Sonnenfeld is a member of Rosedale Church, Toronto.

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Knox College announces new adult education opportunity:

The Certificate Program in Christian Faith and Life

Knox College, through the Ewart Centre for Lay Education, is offering a new adult education opportunity: The Certificate Program in Christian Faith and Life. The program is for men and women who wish to "deepen their understanding of Christian tradition in order to live their faith more effectively in our multifaith, multicultural and multiminded world."

The program has been designed so it can be completed in two years. A certificate is granted upon the completion of four basic courses and four elective courses. An undergraduate degree is not required. The faculty of Knox College will provide the leadership, supplemented by leaders from the church and the Toronto School of Theology.

The basic course for the fall 2001 session is Reading the Bible with Dorcas Gordon and Bradley McLean. The course will consider the ways in which people approach reading the Bible — what causes them to see certain things and not others. Classes will include various methods used by New Testament interpreters and discussion on how these methods might be helpful in Bible study.

The fall electives include Congregation's Song with John Derksen, a many-faceted exploration of hymns. Why does everyone like the same hymns? What goes into a good hymn? Where do hymns come from? What does the future hold for hymn-singing



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in church? The other elective, Lay Ministry: Serving the Church & Society with Susan Sheridan, will provide a look at how people use their faith to make decisions at work, at home and in the community. It will explore the meaning of the ministry of the laity and hear from Christians who seek to connect their faith with their vocations.

For the spring 2002 session, the basic course will be Faith and Spirituality with Nicholas Athanasiadis. The electives will be Christianity Down Through the Ages with Stuart Macdonald and Pastoral Care with John Henderson.

The Ewart Centre for Lay Education is planning to offer courses through various satellite locations, as well as at the college, beginning in the fall of 2002.

Information about The Certificate Program in Christian Faith and Life can be obtained by contacting Susan Sheridan, co-ordinator, Ewart Centre for Lay Education, at (416) 978-4530, or knox.college@utoronto.ca.

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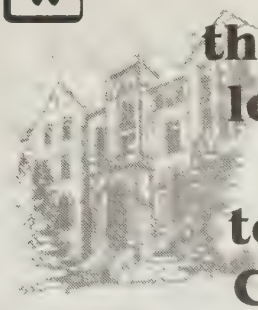
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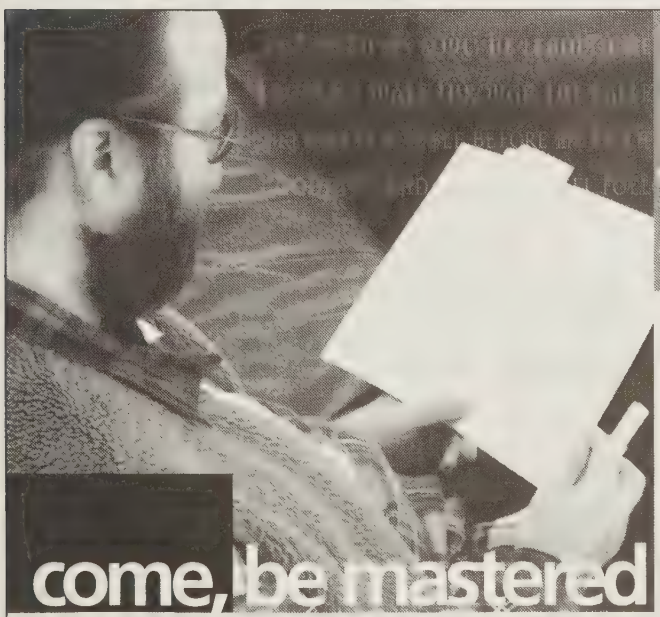
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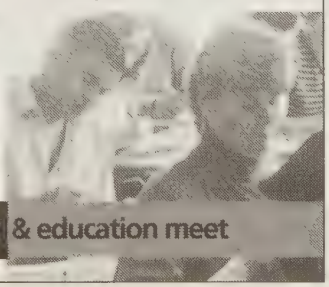
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Casting a net over

by Keith Knight

Surfing the Internet is like driving a car: once you learn how, you won't be able to live without it. But it's more profound than that. The Internet has been compared in importance to the invention of the printing press in that it will forever alter the way we communicate and access information.

Consider this: a six-year-old has access to as much information on the Internet today as his grandfather had in his entire life. That child can access virtually everything anyone ever wanted to know about anything. That is both frightening and incredibly challenging.

A six-year-old has access to as much information on the Internet today as his grandfather had in his entire life. That is both frightening and incredibly challenging.

The challenge for Presbyterians is to determine an effective way to use Internet technology "Christianly"

The challenge for Presbyterians is to determine an effective way to use Internet technology "Christianly" — and that means more than simply staying away from pornographic Web sites. We need to adopt a few principles or guidelines for the proper use of the Internet.

You access the Internet for a variety of reasons. For instance, you can go to www.presbyterian.ca to access all kinds of information about The Presbyterian Church in Canada. You will find past issues of the Acts and Proceedings there, along with a host of documents and reports. A significant part of this Web site, as with most Web sites, is a virtual library of information.

You can also click on the PCCTalk button on that Web site to enter the discussion forum. You will find many discussion topics. Once you register (and you need to register only once to gain future access), you can either respond to existing topics or start new topics. You can talk about worship styles, engage in theological discussions, or deal with practical questions of faith and life. This is a discussion forum, as opposed to a chat room where one engages in live, real-time conversation. A discussion forum may evoke an immediate response (within minutes), it may take several days, or it may be completely ignored.

The *Presbyterian Record* also has a site at www.presbyterian.ca/record. It provides a variety of information about the *Record*, a selection of current articles, plus material to supplement the children's page.

The Internet is a global network connecting millions of computers and billions of documents, pictures and songs — a global library of resources. But that shouldn't overwhelm the user. There is a wonderful feature called "Search" that allows you to search for any conceivable topic simply by typing in a few appropriate words. I once typed in "sermons" and came up with 1.2 million references. Then I narrowed it down to "Reformed sermons" and, then, to "Reformed Easter sermons" to become even more specific. Today's minister has access to tens of thousands of sermons, complete with Scripture references, hymn selections from that denomination's hymn-book, litanies, lectionary references, etc. A minister never needs to write a sermon again although that would rob both the minister and the congregation of the richness of a local application. There are entire Web sites dealing with sermon illustrations and with comparative versions of the same text.

The Internet is both a good and a dangerous friend of the medical profession. It is a good place to find "a second opinion" when one is diagnosed with an illness. In fact, it is also a good place to go for a first opinion. But nothing takes the place of a personal visit to a doctor. Many patients now walk into the doctor's office with a print-out about their illness, more informed to ask questions and to discuss it.

One of the blessings of Internet technology is electronic mail, commonly known as e-mail. You can type and send

the Net

Principles to help you make effective use of the Internet

a message, along with documents, pictures and video clips. Once an e-mail is sent, it normally arrives at its destination seconds later. The problem is, however, that the e-mail sits in someone's computer until it is opened. Some people make a point of checking their e-mails only once a month.

The instantaneous nature of e-mail also breeds a culture where people expect an immediate response. I once received an e-mail followed an hour later by a telephone call from someone saying: "Didn't you get my e-mail? I've been waiting for a response." In the olden days — a decade ago — we would mail a letter, it would arrive a week later, then take another week for a response. We have become a society in a hurry.

As we come to grips with the Internet and its role in our lives, we need to consider a few principles.

Principle 1
The Internet supplements community: it cannot replace it

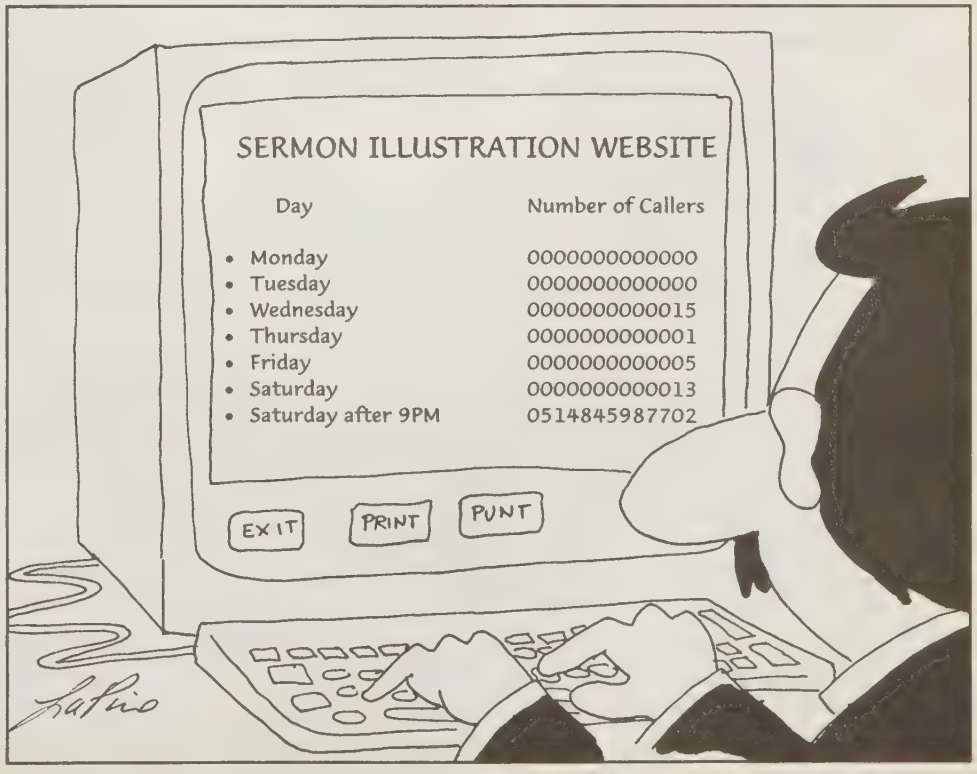
There has been considerable theological discussion about whether or not we can "be church" on the Internet. Scripture insists that "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Matthew 18:20). Does a "virtual" meeting constitute a gathering?

Until now, gathering has always been viewed as a physical gathering in a physical place. Certainly it is possible to develop intense relationships through e-mail or in Internet chat rooms. And it is also possible to share the gospel and to grow in the faith while on the Internet. But individuals experience true community when they physically gather together. In short, the Internet is not a replacement for a worshipping community.

Principle 2
E-mail is an excellent discussion tool

The development of e-mail has drastically reduced the need for meetings within most corporate and church settings. Information can be sent back and forth, reports forwarded, reactions received, thoughts shared. It truly makes for an efficient use of time. There is a risk, however, that this becomes the sole form of interaction among session or committee members, for instance, and that simply won't do. There is still a need for regular, face-to-face interaction.

One session decided to hold a meeting via e-mail rather than face-to-face. The elders were intrigued by the potential of e-mail so they decided to send out the agenda beforehand and, then, began debating each issue by e-mail, sending out copies of every thought to all participants. It was chaotic. No, it was a disaster because they chose the wrong electronic forum. If they had used a secure chat room, they could have had a live discussion with immediate interaction. As it was, they were talking through each other and the discussion became bogged down in frustration. The point is, never use e-mail to carry on a meeting.



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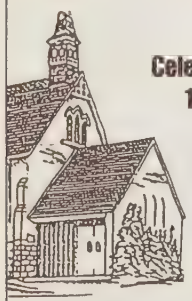
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E-mail has merit when setting the agenda and sending out appropriate reports.

Some churches have every member of the congregation connected by e-mail. They send out the weekly bulletin and newsletter on Fridays and e-mail the sermon on Mondays. Throughout the week, they use e-mail to send out prayer requests or other items of special interest. This is an effective use of Internet technology

Principle 3
The World Wide Web won't bite

The Internet contains a wealth of information, more than anyone will ever need. Click on the Search button and look up a few items of personal interest: perhaps gardening, sports, your own family tree, hobbies, the weather or the news. You can also scan the pages of your favourite larger daily newspaper to keep on top of headlines.

Discover what you can find on the Internet — and how easy it is. That includes being aware of both the good and the bad.

If you have a family with younger children, develop some guidelines. Software programs exist that will block out offensive sites. It is also important to develop guidelines around the amount of time you spend on the Internet. Time passes by quickly. Learn to limit yourself and others within the family.

Develop family habits around the Internet. Spend time together searching for material on new and interesting topics. Develop weekly or monthly themes so that, as a family, you learn together.

Principle 4
Check for truth

This will undoubtedly become the biggest challenge of the Internet within our generation. There are tens of thousands of Web sites, from official ones such as The Presbyterian Church in Canada to the most obscure such as the Church of the Barking Dog. There is no mechanism to differentiate between those that speak with authority and those that can best be described as quacks. A pronouncement from the American Medical Association presumably carries more weight than one person's study while visiting a remote African clinic. In short, look at the source and learn to discern.

Principle 5
Use chat rooms carefully but frequently

There are hundreds of chat rooms — places where you can go to engage in discussions with people of similar interests. One needs to discern the kind of chat room and the level of discussion. Young people are especially proficient in chatting online with their friends through such forums as MSN. Many head home from school and make a bee-line for the computer to continue discussions held moments ago with friends.

There are hundreds of chat rooms that attract people from around the globe — remember, this *is* the World Wide Web — to idle chat or to more profound discussions. This is often an opportunity to develop interesting relationships with others and also a place where you can talk about the importance of faith and your relationship with God.

Principle 6
The Internet has an integral role to play in evangelism

The Internet's audience is both global and local. As Christians and as a church, we have an obligation to consider ways to spread the gospel by means of Internet technology. As individuals, that means speaking out when we have an opportunity to do so in one of many public forums. Most newspapers and television networks, for instance, have Web sites that include forums for public discussion.

As local churches develop their own Web sites, there needs to be a component that allows for a public response such as a "Contact Us" button. We need to create the opportunity for others to ask us about the gospel of Jesus Christ. And, as a church, we have an obligation to provide the people who can respond to those enquiries.

These principles form but a foundation for a meaningful response to Internet technology. We need to embrace this technology with evangelical zeal as one new way in which we can respond to God. R

Keith Knight is associate secretary for Resource Production and Communication of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

PWSDevelopments

a newsletter of Presbyterian World Service & Development

Fall 2001

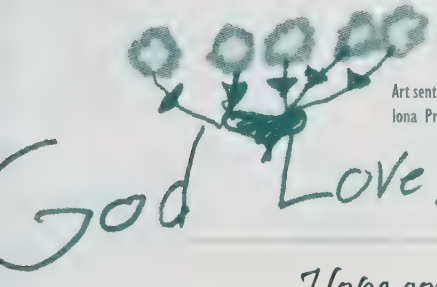


Hope for a world in turmoil

photo: Nils Carstensen, ACT

Drought grips Central America. Ethiopia teeters on the edge of famine. Refugees flee Afghanistan. It is easy to become discouraged when working in relief and development.

Even as hope lies shattered around us, a message from a child reminds us that God's message is love. PWS&D partners are working hard to share messages of love and hope. Inside are stories that relate how love makes a difference.



Art sent to the PWS&D Book of Condolences for New York from Iona Presbyterian Church, Dartmouth Nova Scotia. See backpage.

Hope comes alive in Ethiopia

Lay Gayint in South Gondar, is in one of the most beautiful parts of Ethiopia. Plateaus, steep hills, and deep gorges create a spectacular landscape. This region is also one of the poorest areas of the country. Extensive cultivation, coupled with rugged and steep sloping hillsides, has exposed the land to serious degradation. Crop harvests typically feed people for only five to six months. During the rest of the year, people rely on food aid. (see page 3)





Mohammad Ashraf's grape fields are surrounded by dry brown landscape.

photo: Nils Carstensen, ACT

Struggles from Afghanistan

Mohammad Ashraf proudly holds plump ripe grapes from his vines. The vibrant green of Mohammad's fields—the result of a water project in Central Afghanistan by Action by Churches Together (ACT) which re-established irrigation canals and wells to save vine yards and fruit orchards—lies in stark contrast to the yellow-brown nuances that dominate Afghanistan's dramatic and sweeping landscape. The irrigation project was one of the few signs of hope two ACT communicators found when they visited Afghanistan in July 2001. Nils Carstensen, (see page 2)

Refugee children at Mashlak refugee camp in Afghanistan.

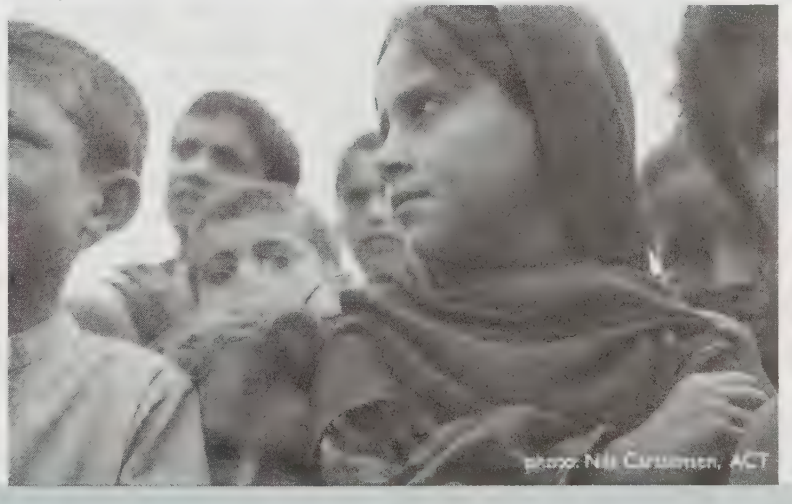


photo: Nils Carstensen, ACT

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This educational resource is produced twice a year by PWS&D with financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).



Irrigation project in Afghanistan helped alleviate drought conditions.

The crisis in Afghanistan is extremely multi-dimensional. Drought, war and religious extremism all play against each other. To extremely generalize: the 1979 Soviet invasion beget war, destroying the country's infrastructure and leading eventually to the conflict that contributed to the rise of the Taliban. The Taliban's repressive Islamic strictures have fundamentally reshaped society and have left little room for any kind of government-led response to the growing drought or other pressing social problems. The nation's educated class has fled, leaving a country run by untrained authorities who are wary of outside assistance yet also, paradoxically, dependent on it. Five million Afghans are dependent on food supplied by foreign non-governmental organizations like ACT.

(continued from p.1) ACT Communications Director reported that their extensive travel and interviews with aid workers and civilians painted an unnerving—at times quietly horrifying—portrait of a nation teetering on the edge of disaster.

You can see it in the eyes of the malnourished children at Mashlak not far from Afghanistan's fierce Dashte-e-Mango—the Desert of Death. Here, in this dusty, windy, unforgiving place, large numbers of villagers have come as a place of last resort. Newly arrived camp inhabitants huddle under black canvas or in shelters dug into the black, sandy soil, seeking respite from the temperatures which sore to over 40°C in summer, and dip well below freezing in winter.

You can see it in the sun-beaten hands of villagers in Karokh as they run their hands over the now useless kernels of dried wheat-brittle. "This is the second year of drought and we've lost all the crops," said one elderly villager who, like others, has sold his livestock at a loss.

You can see it in the hot, dusty streets of Kabul, a capital city—once noted for its tree-lined streets and gardens—now riddled by bullet holes and explosions following years of civil war.

You can see it along the chaotic crowded border with Pakistan where desperate Afghans try to cross, only to be beaten back by the authorities.

That was before September 11, 2001. Before the security situation forced aid organizations to withdraw their international workers leaving five and a half million people, who were already dependent on food aid, at risk of starvation. This was before military strikes. Now, the situation is even worse.

Action by Churches Together and The Canadian Foodgrains Bank—which has shipped 3,600 tons of Canadian wheat, beans and canola oil to Afghanistan over the last three years—are assisting large numbers of Afghan refugees. Both ACT and the CFGB work closely with agencies like the World Food Program to coordinate relief work in the region. ACT is also pursuing means of continuing and strengthening activities inside Afghanistan being carried out by national staff of ACT members. These aid workers, nearly all of them Afghan Muslims, remain dedicated to their work and if anything, feel a stronger commitment to what they do. "The situation is very tense. And although everything is difficult, we can still work", an aid worker said.

The situation in Afghanistan changes daily. It is difficult to know the current status of the irrigation project that was doing so well in July 2001. A major challenge is getting information across the border, as the Taliban has cut all communication lines out of the country. But the message of love, so evident in those relief programs, continues to reach the people of Afghanistan.



Mohammad proudly displays his grapes.

Briefly Speaking

Drought in Nicaragua

Donkeys, horses, and CIVEMN staff and volunteers walked for hours to deliver desperately needed emergency food provisions to remote interior communities in Boaco, Nicaragua. Drought in Central America has left 1.4 million people extremely vulnerable. Farmers have no crops to sell or food to eat. This was CIVEMN's second food distribution this fall with supplies purchased by PWS&D funds.

Nicaragua: Batahola Centre

Many Canadian Presbyterians who have visited Nicaragua will remember the murals and beautiful music at mass in Batahola Centre in a poor neighborhood of Managua, Nicaragua. Founding Sister, Margarita Navarro, passed away very peacefully on September 2, 2001. PWS&D supported Margarita's tireless efforts through the Center to give the youth of Batahola opportunities to learn skills that help them to support their families.

India: Institute for Development Education

PWS&D's partner the Institute for Development Education (IFDE) in Chennai, India has a new executive director, A.G.M. Anitha. Anitha brings a wealth of experience to IFDE. Her masters and doctoral degrees from the University of Madras focused on women, religion and social change. She replaces Robert Guruswamy who for ten years led IFDE's work in sustainable development. Robert sat on PWS&D's committee from 1994-1996. IFDE is part of PWS&D's CIDA program, and receives matching grants from the Canadian International Development Agency.

Small victories in Ethiopia

(continued from page 1)

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank recently sent 4,700 metric tonnes of wheat to Food for the Hungry International Ethiopia (FHI). PWS&D contributed $60,000—matched 4:1 by the Canadian International Development Agency—to the $2.3 million shipment. Most of the wheat went to the Lay Gayint region to feed 75,000 people for five months until the next harvest.

It wasn't always this way. Alemu Tesfaw, an elder in the village, remembers a time when not only was there enough food produced to last all year, but some land was also left fallow. Yohannes Belihu, FHI project manager in Lay Gayint, isn't content with handing out food aid year after year. He believes Lay Gayint can become self-sufficient again.



photo: JF Beauchesne

Above: [illegible]

Yohannes has reason to hope. FHI's "food-for-work" programs have been helping thirteen villages—100,000 people—improve agriculture with reforestation, soil and water conservation, crop productivity, and diversification programs. Throughout these hills—where an increasing population has pushed villagers to plant their fields on progressively steeper slopes—FHI has shown villagers how to terrace the hillsides and build check dams to keep the soil from washing away.

The change is evident. Even in the midst of the current drought, legume species on communal grazing and privately owned lands are helping provide high quality feed for livestock, improve soil fertility, and reduce erosion. Previously barren landscapes and rocky hillsides have been transformed into rich fertile fields. Herds of goats and sheep are in abundance. Farmers are now threshing their grain with healthy cows, oxen and horses.

Change has only just begun in Lay Gayint. The people are well on their way to becoming self-sufficient. This program is showing that even in previously desolate regions, small victories are being won.

Article based on reports from JF Beauchesne, PWS&D and Carol Thiessen, MCC. The background photo depicts the South Gondar hills.



photo: JF Beauchesne



photo: Yvonne Brooks

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

On Tuesday September 25, 2001, over thirty-five people squeezed into the living room, and more gathered outside, to dedicate Marta and Transito Rodriguez's new house in Ahuachapán, El Salvador. The house is the first of a series of 12 houses built by the Federation of Baptist Church of El Salvador (FEBES) with PWS&D's support. The dedication service praised God for the house that so much love and so many hands helped to build.

Transito is a bricklayer by trade. During the civil war, Transito was conscripted into the government forces. At the end of the war, he received a small parcel of land, no pension, and little thanks. With the weak economic performance in the agricultural economy, there has not been steady work for this quiet man with a keen sense of humour. Transito has kept tortillas on the table by taking on whatever small jobs came to hand. The family income, averaging $60 a month, has been barely enough to cover basic expenses, let alone build a house. For many years Transito, his wife Marta, and their children Arili (13), Rebeca (12), Noemi (10), and Carlito (6) lived in a simple shelter made of sticks plastered with mud, and covered with a thatched roof. As he had time, Transito had replaced three of the walls with adobe, giving them slightly more protection.

Two of those adobe walls were destroyed by the earthquakes of January 13, 2001, forcing the family to shelter themselves in a plastic lean-to.

Work on the permanent new home began in August. The whole family pitched in. With help from the pastor's family and other volunteers, a solid, dry, cool, earthquake resistant home has emerged. Over the next year PWS&D will continue to help FEBES build homes and hope in El Salvador.



photo: Jim Patterson

Above: Marta and Transito's new cement earthquake resistant home. Left: Canadian volunteers Yvonne Brooks, Brenda Prokopchuk, Lorna Evans, Brenda Patterson and Evelyn McLachlan helped clear the land and dig the foundations—a very visible lesson in gender equity. A temporary corrugated tin house is in the back.

Making Connections

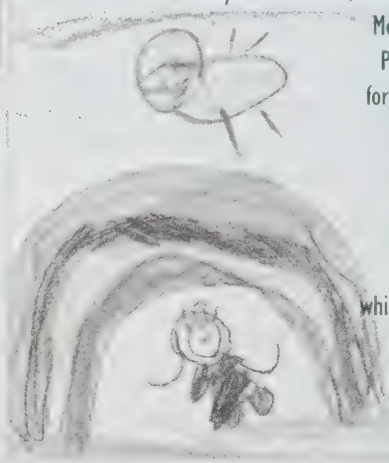
For two weeks in August 2001 Yvonne Brooks and Brenda Prokopchuk from London Presbytery saw the impact of PWS&D programs when they visited PCC partner, the Federation of Baptist Churches of El Salvador (FEBES). They met laughing children in El Refugio, a small school where the church is providing education and a nutritious breakfast. They saw mothers working in micro-businesses, improving their self esteem and developing their sense of community. At a literacy class, they experienced the joy of a woman in her sixties learning to read the language she uses to teach life's lessons to her children and grandchildren. Yvonne wrote, "I will never forget these people. In spite of their long history of oppression, poverty and adverse living conditions, they have hope and faith that the future will be brighter for the children of El Salvador. FEBES and PWS&D are making this dream live."



Yvonne and Brenda join Jim Patterson and youth choir in El Salvador

PWS&D exposure tour grants help Canadians learn more about relief and development work.

This picture, and the message of God's love on the cover, were sent from children at Iona PC, Dartmouth Nova Scotia. They are two of many messages—poems, letters, prayers, art—that came from across Canada offering words of hope, condolence and love in the wake of the tragic events of September 11, 2001. PWS&D compiled the messages and sent a book of condolence to Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City. Reg McQuay, Canadian Presbyterian and former resident of Knox College, attends Fifth Avenue P.C. Reg works with Marsh, Inc., which was severely affected by the attack.



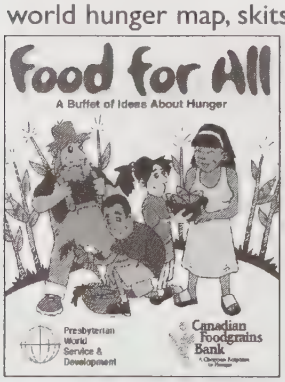
New Resources

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Food for All ($10) educates young Canadians about the problems of world hunger and our role in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. This curriculum contains a "buffet" of ideas including bible stories, a world hunger map, skits and other educational activities. There are many suggestions on ways to adapt the six lesson series for different age groups and purposes.



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raining gets a lift in G

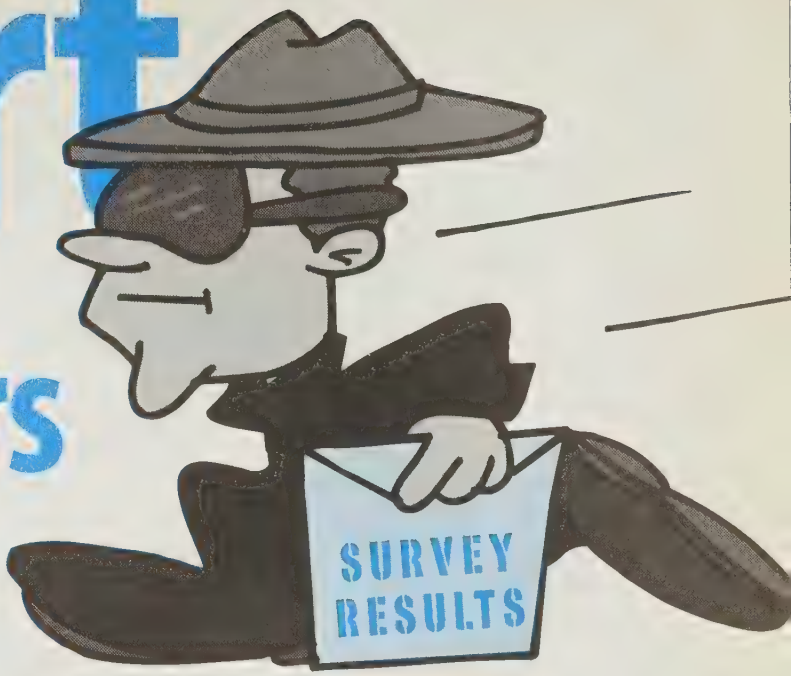
In October 1991, a basic one-story, six-room school opened in the rain-forest town of Dormaa-Ahenkro, Ghana. This vocational school for girls lacked floors, water, and electricity, but it had 90 students anxiously waiting to begin classes. One of many Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) vocational training schools, Dormaa gives young women an opportunity to develop their skills, build self-confidence, earn an income and broaden their horizons. Today the school is an impressive institution that has graduated hundreds of students from its vocational programs.

Now, the PCG is using its experiences in vocational training for men and women to launch an ambitious program to equip the educators who teach at schools like Dormaa. PWS&D is helping the PCG establish the Presbyterian Center for Vocational Instructors Development (PRECEVID). This center will provide technical, entrepreneurial, and pedagogical skills to trainers of agriculture, construction, drafting, health and community care, information technology, catering and culinary skills, and engineering.



Planting a Seed. In 1990 Zoltan and Elizabeth Tayti of Knox Church, Welland traveled to Dormaa-Ahenkro, Ghana. They lived with the people and shared their experiences. Before they left a seed was planted. The Taytis returned to Canada with Dormaa Presbyterian Church's dream of building a vocational school. While the church began building with donated timber and volunteer labour, the Taytis and Knox Welland started raising funds for the work. For the past 11 years that seed has grown. Donations channeled through PWS&D have helped the school acquire 150 sewing machines, a vehicle and a potter's kiln, and build additional classroom units, two student hostels, a library hall, a water collection tank and a water well. Zoltan died on August 5, 2001 having left a tremendous impact on the community in Dormaa. He asked that memorial donations go to PWS&D to benefit the school.

Report to the shareholders



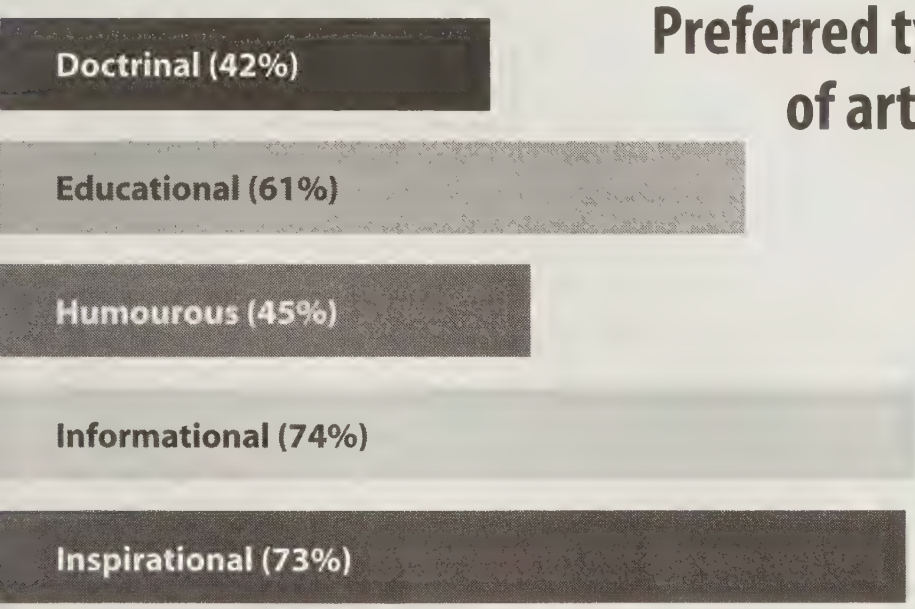
by John Congram

*The **Record**'s 2001 survey of its readership*

Almost 500 readers took time to fill out and send in our survey that appeared in the June *Record*. About one-fifth did it on our Internet site. Some took time to attach additional notes and letters. Thanks to all of you. What becomes abundantly clear in reading the replies is how fortunate the magazine is to have so many dedicated and loyal subscribers. Eighty-nine per cent of you claim to read "most" or "all" of the magazine.

What does the average reader of the *Record* look like? Most are married (75%). Their level of education is high (67% have a college or university degree). Forty-two per cent make $40,000 a year or higher. About an equal number use e-mail and have the Internet in their homes as those who don't. The majority of you (75%) have been reading the magazine for more than five years, with 12% of readers for two to five years. Nine per cent have begun to read the magazine within the past year. This includes a significant number of younger readers. Presbyterians are a travelling bunch, with two-thirds saying they plan to take a trip within the next year.

Preferred types of articles



A number objected to the question about income. This question, along with a number of others in the second section of the survey, was included at the request of the firm that handles the advertising for the *Record*. Answers in this section are used to convince prospective advertisers that *Record* readers will buy their products. And, no, we never sell our subscription list.

What did you say about the magazine? You were overwhelmingly positive. On a scale of 1 to 10, 78% rated the magazine as 8 or higher. One subscriber gave us a 9.99 with the notation that "only God is perfect." One suggested it would only be better if it were larger "so I couldn't read it cover to cover in one evening."

Some wonder why we print all those nasty letters, but that is the section most of our readers turn to first (26%), followed by For the Record (25%) and People and Places (22%). The majority (77%) says they find the inserts by various departments of the church useful.

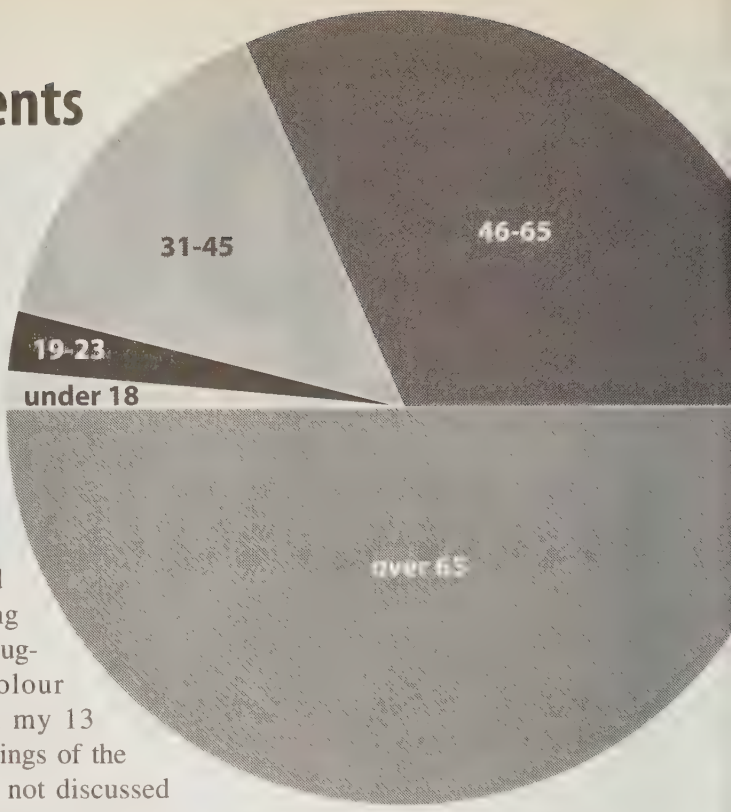
The most frequent complaint, especially from Westerners, is that the magazine is too Ontario oriented. This is a danger of which we are aware, especially with the imbalance of members coming from Ontario. Over half of those who filled in our survey were from Ontario.

We try to compensate by encouraging contributing editors from outside Ontario and by having the majority of our regular columnists come from somewhere other than Ontario.

Although some have complained about the ads, only five per cent reported they never read them. And, in fact, one person commented: "You do a great job! Even your advertisements are informative!" Someone else suggested we sell more ads so we would be able to use better paper and have more articles.

We received, of course, many diverse and sometimes contradictory views. Some would like more "meaty" articles while others complained there were already too many articles "away above my head." One person complained "the *Record* and the church hierarchy are too closely attached to the protocols of the Book of Forms and *The Westminster Confession of Faith*." Others felt that everything that goes into the magazine should reflect a Reformed theological perspective. One person wanted more articles written by and for college students and professors. Several suggested we needed more lay input. Some sections of the magazine are both loved and hated. Peter Plymley II is a good example: the favourite column of many readers, but never read by others. Whatever your views on particular sections, we hope most of you agree with the person who wrote: "I don't always agree with some points ... but am always stimulated and look forward to receiving it."

Respondents by age



Many of you offered suggestions on improving the magazine. A number suggested using more colour and/or better paper. In my 13 years as editor, few meetings of the *Record* Committee have not discussed this topic. Should we move to more colour and better paper and, therefore, fewer pages? To this point, the committee has opted for content over style.

Some of you requested larger print. Here we have a solution. Each month, we produce an audio version with excerpts from the magazine free for the asking. Simply send your name and address to our office.

Others would like to see the address on the back cover. We would like that, too, but our advertisers wouldn't.

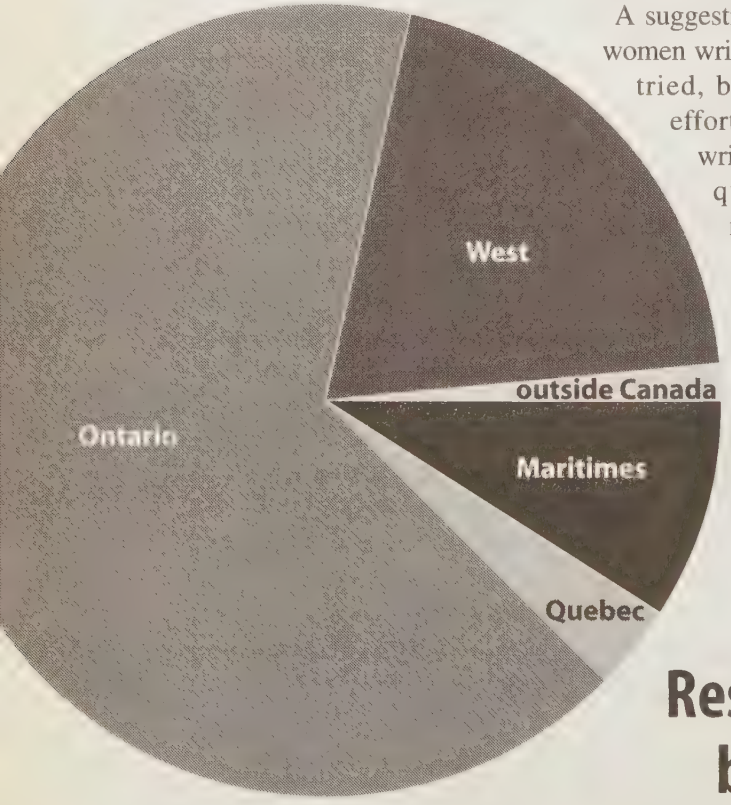
A suggestion that we recruit younger women writers is a good one. We have tried, but we will make greater efforts in the future. Bless the writer who, in response to the question of what would make the *Record* a better magazine, replied, "If I subscribed rather than picking up a copy from a friend."

What would the subscribers like to see in the magazine of the future? If one word could be used, it would be diversity. Among those things readers mentioned most were: how congregations minister effectively in their communities, the church of the future, contemporary versus traditional worship, lay involvement in the life of the church, personal stories of how Christians deal with and live their Christian lives, the history and development of the Presbyterian Church, how churches can attract young people and how smaller churches can survive. What will not come as good news to some was the request by a significant number for more information on human sexuality. (This request was *not* confined to young, urban, Ontario respondents.)

What about the future of the magazine? One thing we can say for sure: next June, the magazine will have a new editor — granting the wish of at least one respondent who said the magazine would be better if it had a new editor.

Two main challenges confront the magazine. The first is finding new and creative ways of using technology to serve the purposes of the magazine. The *Record* does have a Web site that we have begun to make more interactive, but more needs to be done.

The second and largest challenge is to involve younger folk in the life of the magazine. The age of *Record* readers reflects, unfortunately, that of the church generally, so it remains an uphill battle. Nevertheless, it is one that must be waged continuously. R



Respondents by region



The diaries of Etty Hillesum 1941 to 1943

"We should be willing to act as a balm for all wounds"

— last entry in Etty Hillesum's diaries

by Gabe Rienks

Etty Hillesum lived in the same part of the city I lived in, Amsterdam South. The streets she walked, I walked a hundred times. From her window, she could see a large, open field where we used to play baseball. She was a 27-year-old Jew when she started writing her diaries on March 9, 1941.

> Here it goes. This is a painful and well-nigh-insuperable step for me, yielding up so much that has been suppressed to blank, lined paper. The main difficulty, I think, is a sense of shame and, at times, I'm nothing more or less than an immeasurably frightened creature.

At the same time, a young Jewish girl wrote her diary in that same city, hiding somewhere in an attic — Anne Frank.

At first, Etty writes: "When I pray, I hold a silly, naïve or deadly serious dialogue with what is deepest inside me, which for convenience sake I call God. I repose in myself." Prayer to her was a monologue within herself. Life was a closed circuit, cut off from God, where one does not need God.

Did this image of God remain the same to Etty even when, in the concentration camp, she "stood before the bare palisade of life, life's innermost framework, stripped of all outer trappings"? She wrote: "I might of course read the Bible each morning, but I don't think I'm ready for that. I still worry about the real meaning of the book, rather than to lose myself in it." Later, she states, "I have recently been picking up odd sentences from the Bible." And, "If you have given sorrow the space its gentle origins demand, then you may truly say: life is so beautiful and so rich it makes you want to believe in God."

"The absence of hatred in no way implies the absence of moral indignation."

— Etty Hillesum, 1943

In the meantime, signs appeared everywhere: "No trespassing for Jews." The yellow Star of David had marked them as sheep for the slaughter. The more the ring of horror closed in on her, however, the more Etty built up her inner defences, and the more God became real to her.

> The funny thing is I don't feel in their clutches anyway, whether I stay here or I'm sent away; I feel safe in God's arms.

In April 1942, a wholesale deportation of Jews began — destination Westerbork, a camp on the heath of Drente, a province in the northeast of Holland. Westerbork was a transit camp, the last stop before Auschwitz. Etty voluntarily accompanied the first group of prisoners to Westerbork. She had a permit to go, now and then, back to Amsterdam. At home, however, she was longing for the camp.

> Those two months behind barbed wire have been the two richest and most intense months of my life, in which my highest values were so deeply confirmed. I have learned to love Westerbork.

Friends urged Etty to go into hiding, but she refused. "I don't think I would feel happy if I were exempted from what so many have to suffer." Her life became an ongoing prayer: "I call myself a kneeler in training."

minister

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Right: **Eight exercise books closely written in a small, hard-to-decipher hand: the diaries of Etty Hillesum.**

Previous page: **Etty Hillesum, circa 1941.**

> Some times I feel as if a layer of ashes were being sprinkled over my heart, as if everything were falling apart. But these are only brief moments, for once you have begun to walk with God, you only keep on walking with him and all of life becomes a long stroll — such a marvellous feeling.

She was surprised how her faith grew. "All the strength and love and faith in God which one possesses has grown so miraculously in me of late." From August 1942 to September 1943, Etty was in the Westerbork camp. "At night the barracks sometimes lay in the moonlight, made out of silver and eternity: like a plaything that had slipped from God's over-occupied hand."

Day in, day out, she walked through the misery and the mud of the barracks. She became the thinking heart of the camp, trying to be a balm for many wounds. A woman asked Etty, "Do you think God will understand my doubts." She saw a dying, old man being carried out, reciting for himself ShemaYisrael, the Jewish prayer for the dying. She saw a father ready to depart for Auschwitz blessing his wife and children, and being himself blessed by an old rabbi.

Every week, a train of freight cars pulled up in the camp to load 1,000 victims — men and women, old and sick, children and babies — to transport them to their final destination. On September 7, 1942, on a sudden special order from The Hague, Father, Mother, Mischa and Etty Hillesum were told to get ready. A farmer found a postcard Etty threw out of the train:

> Christine, opening the Bible at random I find this, "The Lord is my high tower." I'm sitting on a rucksack in the middle of a full freight car. We left the camp singing.

After that, her voice was lost in the hell of Auschwitz. She died November 30, 1943.

Etty had walked through deep valleys. "Mortal fear in every fiber. Complete collapse, lack of self-confidence, panic." And, yet, the end was a victory. She read words from Psalm 18 on that dreadful morning:

> I love you, Yahweh, my strength,
> Yahweh is my rock and my bastion.
> I take shelter in him, he is to be
> praised!

"We left the camp singing." "The Lord is my high tower." This God is our God! R

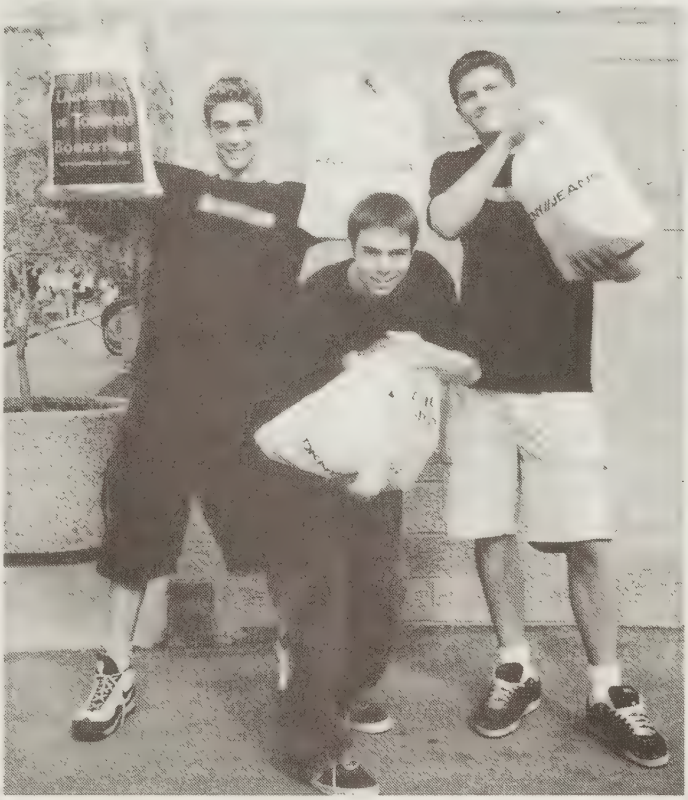
Gabe Rienks, a retired minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, lives in Brantford, Ont. He has visited the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam where he "had the privilege to spend some time with Etty's original diaries." *Etty Hillesum: An interrupted life. Letters from Westerbork,* Henry Holt and Company.

Alex MacLeod

"Boom, boom, boom, boom — I want you in my room"

Surviving university life in the 21st century

To the pounding bass line of a song by the Vengaboys, hundreds of first-year students (frosh) at the University of Toronto's (U of T) downtown campus experienced Carnival Day on September 7. Students roamed through pavilions filled with displays by student clubs and other organizations. They were looking for different things but, perhaps, most of all, they were after "Free Stuff!": from deodorant and condoms to Freezies and Bibles on CD. If it was free, it didn't last long.



First-year University of Toronto students show the bags of free stuff gathered at Carnival Day.

I've always been fascinated by Carnival Day. It represents university life in so many ways — the good, the bad and the ugly. There's a scene that stands out in my mind from the movie *Chariots of Fire*. The new students at Cambridge, or one of those sherry-soaked, ivy-covered English schools, are at their 1920s equivalent of Carnival Day. They move slowly — and contemplatively — from the Classics Society to the Empire Club. They are gentlemen and scholars in seriously starched collars, every one of them.

But this is 2001. And with "boom, boom, boom, boom" ringing in our ears and frosh lining up in droves for their first credit card, things have changed.

Confusion and choice rule at Carnival Day. It's crowded, and the number of groups present is overwhelming. Students are still finding their way around in all sorts of ways. They have the freedom to choose like never before, but they're confused and some are feeling isolated.

As Bob Shantz, Lutheran chaplain at U of T, put it: "On this day, people are here for survival. They're here looking for community and wondering who they can trust."

The university gives you a number when you register. What comes next is getting to know people so that life isn't reduced to a sequence of impersonal trips from home to classes and back again. With tuition going through the roof and teaching quality seemingly low on the agenda, there's solidarity in surviving when the system doesn't seem to care.

Of course, there's also solidarity in beer. Consume large quantities of alcohol in a group, and your friendship problems are suddenly — and temporarily — gone. For some frosh, that's part of the orientation ritual. But there's more meaningful common ground out there. A greater number of students find community and extra-curricular life in groups formed around ethnicity, area of study, religion, sports, political activism, philanthropy, leisure and many others. And it's all yours to discover.

So you've always wanted to experience harmony with nature through nudism, you say? You could join the Naturist Club. You're interested in Jewish mysticism? A Kabbalist Society started last year. The ethnomusicology students have their own club, too. With over 200 student groups at U of T, there really is something for everyone.

As I wandered through the expanse of groups, for a moment I heard a different

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kind of music: "You are my strength when I am weak, you are the treasure that I seek … Jesus, Lamb of God, worthy is your name." Aha! I whirled about, with my spidey sense tingling like crazy. "Christians!" I surmised. Sure enough, the Chinese Christian Fellowship with worship tunes blaring was only the tip of the iceberg. By the end of the day, I had counted nine separate tables with Christian groups.

There are at least 35 religious or faith-based groups at U of T — almost 20 per cent of the total. And more keep appearing. Christian groups are the most numerous; but every other major world religion, as well as the New Age in multiple manifestations, is here as well.

Deanne Fischer, from the university's Student Affairs office, commented: "We used to think of students coming to university to get away from home and reinvent themselves, often by rebelling … But, lately, we see more people finding their identity in faith, looking for something with deeper roots." She mentioned this is most apparent among Muslim students. The Muslim Students Association is a large, active group; it is also not splintered into nine or more different chapters.

At the end of Carnival Day, one major theme comes to the surface: every student is a consumer and getting stuff. "Free Stuff!" motivates them. I found myself wondering how Jesus would join in with these crowds. Would he overturn the tables of the VISA money-lenders (and forgive all our debts?) or would he draw a crowd to himself by multiplying the Freezies and teaching about his Kingdom ("Boom, boom, boom, boom — I have prepared for you a room")?

I can't say I know but, as the dance music faded, another song (with less bass guitar) came to mind: "Freely, freely, you have received; freely, freely, give; go in my name and because you believe, others will know that I live."

There's free stuff and, then, there's freedom — if you know what I mean. R

Alex MacLeod, a part-time student at Knox College, Toronto, works with university and young adult ministries at Knox Church, Toronto, and has a field education placement with the *Record*.

Ted Siverns



King Jesus & the cabbage dilemma

To remove the politics from Christmas is to end up with nothing

Luke 2:1-14

During the civil war in Lebanon, I was asked to speak in Beirut about Christmas. But I was advised not to mention politics. It seemed people did not want to be reminded of would-be kings, self-serving and power-hungry presidents, premiers, prime ministers, gang leaders and war-lords. By this time, they were fed up with politics and politicians and simply wanted, what? I wondered.

I tried mightily, but there seemed to be no way to speak in or of Advent without something of a political theme. Luke couldn't avoid politics either though he, too, was probably tired of the power of Rome and the self-aggrandisement of the Caesars, the kings of that time and place. There appears to be no way around the politics. From the opening pages, Jesus is called "Messiah." At the heart of the gospel is this claim, a central tenet of the Christian faith, that Jesus is "*Christos*" (Greek), "*MeshiaH*" (Aramaic) and "King" (English).

How can we avoid politics when we read of an event that happened in the time of Caesar Augustus and Governor Quirinius of Syria? An event that occurred at the time of a census, an occupying army and a suffering people. The politically charged promise to the shepherds — of all people — was of a new king, a king for all people, even for lowly shepherds.

Israel, hardly ever without foreign occupation, looked for a king, a king who would be like David. Over the years, they had forgiven or forgotten David's bad points; but, as a king, he was certainly better than average — at least, if you were on his side. No, not a king like David exactly, for David had a side of his character that was not pleasing to either God or the people. The kings Israel had experienced were, for the most part, a sorry, power-hungry, uncaring lot. They remind me of the cats, each smaller than the other, in Dr. Seuss's *The Cat in the Hat*. It was almost as if Shakespeare wrote of these kings in Richard II:

> How some have been depos'd;
> some slain in war;
> Some haunted by the ghosts they
> have deposed.

American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, also writing of another time and place, caught the mood of a people suffering and a God who cares:

> God said, I am tired of kings,
> I suffer them no more;
> Up to my ear the morning brings
> The outrage of the poor.

Politics like this? A king like these kings? That was the mood and message behind the call for "Christmas without politics."

The problem is Christmas is entirely wrapped up with politics. Therefore, I was faced with a dilemma. If I unwrapped the political layers from the *mafouf* (Arabic "cabbage") of Christmas, I would get to a place where there is precisely nothing. "God-talk is intrinsically and inevitably political talk" (Brueggemann). Without politics, without the King, there is no Christmas. We may have a baby, carols, Santa Claus and lots of presents, but not Christmas.

Without politics, without the King, there is no Christmas. We may have a baby, carols, Santa Claus and lots of presents, but not Christmas

What we are confronted with is a highly political story but one that critically confronts all our usual ways of thinking about the ways of politics, about the ways of kings, presidents, premiers and prime ministers. As Hans Küng observed:

> Jesus bursts all the normal categories of his time. He belongs neither to the establishment, nor to the revolutionary movement, nor to the flight from the world symbolized by Qumran, nor to those like the Pharisees capable of moral compromise. He belongs neither to right nor left, nor does he simply mediate between them. He really rises above them: above all alternatives, all of which he plucks up

Presbyterian quiz #2

Famous firsts

1. The first Presbyterians in Canada came from
(a) Scotland
(b) France
(c) Holland

2. Canada's first Presbyterian prime minister was
(a) Mackenzie King
(b) Sir Wilfrid Laurier
(c) Sir John A. Macdonald

3. Canada's first Presbyterian congregation was located in
(a) Louisbourg
(b) Montreal
(c) Toronto
(d) Quebec City

4. The first Presbyterian missionary sent from Canada was
(a) John Geddie
(b) James Nisbet
(c) James MacGregor

5. The first home missions superintendent was
(a) James Robertson
(b) John Black
(c) John Morton

See page 48 for the answers.

from the roots. Jesus is … provocative — provocative on all sides.

Jesus' kingship is like nothing that had been seen before or since. He wore a thorny crown. He was berated because he identified with the outcasts, misfits and sinners. He was castigated for failing to be a good Pharisee, a wild zealot, or for not being one of the silent majority. He was inappropriate, a nuisance, a stumbling block, a scandal.

You can't have Christmas without this King. You can't have a Sunday-morning-only Jesus. To remove the "political leaves" of the cabbage of Christmas is to end up with nothing. R

For discussion and reflection

- Read the passage carefully, underlining all political references.
- Discuss: "Jesus was more revolutionary than the revolutionaries, or revolutionary in a very different way. The revolution he had in mind was a radical change of heart on the part of [humankind], involving conversion away from selfishness and toward the willing service of God and of people in general." (Clark Pinnock)
- Look at the *Book of Praise* for "king" hymns such as "The King of love my Shepherd is."
- Can there be an authentic Christmas without a political dimension?

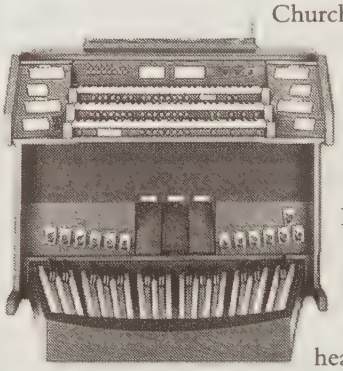
L. E. (Ted) Siverns is the minister of First Church in New Westminster, B.C.

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Congregation gives rest to the heavy laden

It was a Tuesday evening, and members of the Atlantic Mission Society (AMS) of St. David's Church, St. John's, were gathered for a regularly scheduled meeting. But this was not an ordinary Tuesday night and it would not be an ordinary meeting. It was the night of September 11. The AMS members, like the members of the session, board of managers and the congregation who joined them, had spent much of the day glued to their televisions as the tragic events of the terrorist attack on the United States unfolded. The scenes they had watched took place far from St. John's, but some of the consequent activity would be close at hand.



Photo by Larry Bauer

Members of St. David's Church in St. John's await stranded travellers on September 11.

Among the aircraft turned away from U.S. air space that day were 27 that landed at Tarbay, on the edge of St. John's. St. David's was one of several churches in the area that responded, offering accommodation for 50 to 70 people. Calls were made to members of the congregation and, before long, there was a great pile of bedding in the church hall and a kitchen filled with cookies, soft drinks and other food.

Eventually, the meeting ended, but clerk of session and AMS member Lillian Crawford and board of managers co-chair Stephen Bruneau, co-ordinators of the response effort, remained behind. At 12:30 a.m., a call came from one of the emergency centres informing them 30 people, including young children, were on the way. The weary (they had spent 17 hours on the plane waiting for each person to pass through Customs and Immigration) and luggage-less passengers were welcomed with open arms — and with toothbrushes and toothpaste. By the time two other calls had come through (at 2:30 and 4 a.m.), St. David's had 69 travellers bedded down in the hall and sanctuary. A television was operating in the library and snacks were available in the kitchen.

In the morning, more help arrived, equipped with willing hands, baked goods and cars with which to take the stranded visitors to local sites and stores. Among the many groups in the city that offered help was the congregation of St. Andrew's Church, St. John's. When it became apparent no one would be able to resume travelling for at least another day, a pot-luck supper and evening concert were organized. Among the entertainers was one of the stranded passengers, Previn Moore, an American pianist and vocalist living in Germany.

There were many interesting stories among the passengers. Rev. David Renwick, minister of Second Presbyterian Church in Lexington, Kentucky, had been ordained in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. He paid a visit to St. Andrew's Church for a surprise reunion with its minister, Rev. David Sutherland, and with Rev. Ian Wishart of St. David's Church, both of whom had participated in his ordination. Dr. Alvin Crawford, a noted orthopaedic surgeon from Cincinnati, Ohio, took the opportunity to visit the local Health Sciences Centre. Margaret Ewers, the only passenger from one flight to be staying at St. David's, had her fears allayed when the pilot came to the church to assure her she would not be left behind.

And there was at least one thing all the travellers had in common — heartfelt gratitude for the hospitality they received. As Alvin Crawford, the stranded surgeon, put it, "Once you have been in a situation like this and have had this kind of care, you can never look at things in the same way." (*Based on a report by Ian Wishart*)

Rejoice 2001! a time for rejoicing

About 450 people, primarily youth, gathered for Rejoice 2001! at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, in May. An initiative of the presbyteries of Hamilton and Niagara, the event brought youth and others from within the presbyteries together for an exciting worship experience.

The evening began with an open house sponsored by the youth groups of the Niagara presbytery. Mixers, such as a giant Twister game, Taboo game, M&M stacking, swinging doughnuts into their mouths, a scavenger hunt to find different types of people and an impromptu singsong from PYPS encouraged participants to get to know each other.

The venue then switched to the (worship) theatre where videos, music by the band Crosswalk, drama, a reflection led by Rev. Mark Lewis and Communion formed a celebration of Christ that was both relevant and dynamic to the participants.

The presbyteries hope to sponsor a similar event in the future.

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Remembering the fallen

Rev. James Peter Jones and his wife, Dorothy, stand beside the Spirit of Canada as she weeps, brooding over the graves of the valiant dead at the Vimy Ridge Memorial. As the Presbyterian representative on the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy (ICCMC), Jones participated in a February visit to the military base and church community in Geilenkirchen, Germany. With Presbyterian chaplain Maj. Bob Baker and his wife, Betha, as their guides, the Joneses made informal visits to the Vimy Memorial, the Newfoundland Memorial of Beaumont-Hamel, the original burial site of Canada's Unknown Soldier in the Cabaret Rouge Cemetery, and SHAPE headquarters in Belgium.

James Peter retired from the ICCMC this year after 12 years of service to the chaplaincy of the Canadian Military Forces. Rev. Tom Gemmell succeeds him as the ICCMC Presbyterian representative.



New co-ordinator begins work by stressing YIM's importance

Mary Ingram, the new co-ordinator of Youth in Mission (as of September 3, 2001), is certainly no stranger to working with youth and children. A graduate in recreation and health studies from the University of Waterloo, Ontario, she most recently worked for the Central Vancouver Island Health Region as a school-based prevention worker. Known as Healthy Mary to the children and community, she was responsible for creating and implementing a program that focused on leadership development, self-esteem building and healthy life-styles teaching. While living in Duncan, she was an active member of St. Andrew's Church, where she led the youth group, directed the presbytery camp and was involved in the leadership of the PYPS in the Synod of British Columbia.



According to Mary, "Youth love to be empowered" and "wonderful things happen" when they are. Unfortunately, youth do not always have the initiative or the tools with which to be empowered. "Aside from the obvious education about the church in our world and the methods of service one can take on, YIM and other mission experiences have the opportunity to bring kids to their fullest potential," Mary says.

This past summer, YIM participated in two mission tours: one to Mistawasis, a First Nations reserve in Saskatchewan; the other to Eastern Europe. Both tours are planned again for 2002, and other possible international trips and Canadian projects are being considered.

"I want to encourage youth and young adults to discover new ways to use their gifts," Mary says.

[Mary Ingram, co-ordinator, Youth in Mission, can be reached at 4225 rue Verdun, Verdun, Que. H4G 1L4. Tel: (514) 761-1452. Toll-free: 1-800-619-7301, ext. 265. E-mail: mingram@presbyterian.ca]

Presbyterian church choir brings its music to two famous cathedrals

One morning in March 1999, Paul Grimwood, choir director of Central Church, Hamilton, Ontario, opened his e-mail to find a message headed "Good news from St. Paul's." It was a message he found hard to believe. His choir had been accepted to sing for a week of services at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, England, during the summer of 2001.

It had all begun as a flight of fancy three years before, when the choir was considering an overseas tour. Among the letters of enquiry the choir sent to England and Scotland was one exploring the remote possibility of singing a final service in London. That letter received a prompt reply from Gordon Giles of St. Paul's — and it wasn't a polite "Thanks, but no thanks!" On the contrary, it was an offer of a week in residence, subject to a taped audition.

Six months later, the choir was offered a choice of dates, resulting in six services (five Evensongs and one Eucharist) in August. Later still, a letter came from Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford offering five services there (three Evensongs, Matins and a Eucharist).

For the about 50-member choir of Central Church, the amount of music required for those 11 services was staggering. After numerous rehearsals during an extremely hot Ontario summer, the choir boarded a plane for England.



The choir of Central Church, Hamilton, Ontario, at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, England.

No amount of rehearsals, however, could have prepared the choir for, as one member put it, the "intangibles," the "thoughts and feelings" they would experience when worshipping in the two historic cathedrals: the small and intimate Christ Church and the supremely beautiful St. Paul's. Few Canadian choirs have had the honour of singing in these two great buildings. For Presbyterians to do so is even more rare. The experience of being a small part of the centuries-old tradition of worship in the cathedrals brought tears to many eyes and created lasting memories. (*From a report by Paul Grimwood*)

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Triennium 2001 an amazing experience

From July 24-29, Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, was transformed into a high-energy house of worship as about 7,000 Presbyterian youth from around the world gathered for the 2001 Presbyterian Youth Triennium. Among the 650 Canadian participants (and 50 leaders) were Robert Makinson, 17, of St. Andrew's Church, Lindsay, Ontario, and Nancy Thompson, 16, of Tweedsmuir Church, Orangeville, Ontario. What follows are some of their youthful reflections on Triennium.



It was when my feet stepped off the synod bus that I realized I was finally at Triennium 2001, an event I had been anticipating ever since I attended Canada Youth 2000 at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. I knew Triennium would be a time of worship and fellowship. I knew I would meet many new people and grow in old friendships. I also knew Triennium would be a lot of fun.

What I couldn't have predicted, however, was the magnitude of the event — 7,000 people — so many that we had to hold worship in two buildings. On Friday evening, even with several stations at which to get bread and wine, it took half an hour to serve Communion.

The best part of worship for me was the music. I knew almost every song (aside from the theme song, "Even the stones will shout!" which had 12 verses), and singing praise to God with thousands of other believers was an amazing experience. The drama was also moving.

Events such as Canada Youth 2000 and Triennium are especially inspiring and important in the spiritual lives of youth. But such events need to be more prevalent. Youth come to depend on large worship experiences that simply cannot be held every week or two. As a result, they tend to have an occasional "mountaintop experience," where they feel closer to Christ, but then "return to the valley" and their old ways after the events are over. This creates a roller-coaster ride in which the relationship between youth and Jesus Christ depends on events instead of on fellowship, prayer and study. Extra emphasis needs to be placed on youth at the congregational level. Perhaps, a youth songbook and other worship resources would help.

A video was made at Triennium in which many participants talked about what was, for them, the "Wow!" experience of the event. For me, that moment came as I watched, along with 7,000 other people, a teenager from Texas on that video talk about how someone in his discussion group had shared his faith with him, and how this sharing had deepened his own understanding of his relationship to Jesus Christ. *I* was that person. I knew then what the phrase "Encourage and build one another up" really means.

My experience at Triennium was more amazing than I could have expected and, probably, more than I deserved. I learned much about Jesus Christ and furthered my relationship with my Lord. Only 32 months until Triennium 2004. I can't wait!

— Robert Makinson

I have been raised in a Presbyterian household. I have gone to church on Sundays and attended Sunday school. But the Word of God had never really hit me. All that changed with the 2001 Triennium where I had the opportunity to meet, worship and socialize with other Presbyterian young people. It was unlike any experience I have ever had.

It began with the opening night worship — a high-energy service that had 7,000 screaming young people on their feet. Everyone felt God's glory and no one was afraid to show it. The Triennium theme, "Even the stones will shout!" was expressed in phenomenal fashion. We sang praises to God, uniting our voices in many new songs led by the official worship band, Hematitans (the name for iron in rock form — they are "strong in the Lord").

Another important part of Triennium was the quarry groups, discussion groups composed of 10 people from different parts of the world. It was fascinating to share beliefs and ideas with youth from other countries. One speaker told of her adventures getting to Triennium from Trinidad and of her anxieties over returning safely to her family because of political unrest in her country. I thanked God many times for the safety of my home in Canada.

Throughout the week, the drama team produced amazing skits that brought home the need for youth to "shout out." If we don't shout out, what will the stones say in our place? The sharing of God's Word is a challenge that each participant took home.

A memory I will always treasure is of Communion on the final evening. The service began with the usual "energizers" and gradually progressed to the calmness and presence of the Holy Spirit. Afterwards, 7,000 teenagers paraded down the streets of Purdue University singing a song called "Sanctuary." The silence of the evening was enhanced by the soft rhythmic sounds of "Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true … "

The Spirit moved me so much at Triennium that I was afraid to leave the enthusiastic environment I had enjoyed for five days. I am looking forward to the next Triennium already! Thanks to the support of my congregation, five of its youth are reaching out to share God's Word so that even the stones will ***not*** have to shout.

— Nancy Thompson

Ecumenical jury singles out two films at Montreal festival

The ecumenical jury at this year's Montreal Film Festival singled out two films that met its criteria of being distinguished "not only by artistic merit, but also by their exploration of the ethical, social and spiritual values that make life human." By coincidence, they were the same two films the festival's official jury selected: *Baran*, a story about Afghani immigrants in Iran, and *Torzok*, a Hungarian film about a home for boys in the Communist era. However, whereas the official jury split its prize between the two films, the ecumenical jury awarded the prize solely to *Torzok* and gave *Baran* a commendation.

Canadian Presbyterians played a prominent role in the work of the ecumenical jury. Rev. Andrew Johnston of St. Andrew's Church, Ottawa, a key figure with Inter Film, a Protestant association of people interested in films and faith, also plays a part in selecting the jury. This year, he recruited Rev. Geoff Johnston of Dunnville, Ontario, as one of the three Protestants on the six-member jury (the others were Roman Catholics).

According to Geoff Johnston, because the ecumenical jury was composed of people of faith, it was able to see the brighter moments in the often bleak films as evidences of grace. "Film-making is largely about telling stories," says Johnston, "some of which deal with the basic elements of human life. We dealt with these films, these pictures of human life, as we deal with human life itself, in the light of the city whose builder and maker is God."



Members of the Montreal Film Festival ecumenical jury engaged in a roundtable discussion (left to right): Geoff Johnston, Father Peter Malone (Australia), André Raymond (Montreal), Patsy Kendall (North Carolina), Teresita Hermano (Philippines) and Siriwan Santisakultarm (Thailand).

briefly noted

Mission staff departures and arrivals
Arrivals: *Jim and Brenda Patterson*, furlough in Canada from El Salvador, Nov. - Feb.
Departures: *Sonya Henderson*, for Romania, Oct. 15; *Ken Stright*, for Guyana (short-term assignment), Nov. 7.

Best Christmas stocking stuffer:
The *Presbyterian Record*. It rolls up easily and looks darn good in argyle.

news scan

Politicians influenced by religion, but don't get it

Australian politicians are influenced by religion more often than most people think but are ill-equipped to deal with the sacred, according to a new book based on 50 interviews with leading Australian politicians from all parties. The author, Dr. Marion Maddox, argues that the popular image of Australia's secular political system is wrong. Religion constantly influences public life, she claims. However, politicians and journalists fail to recognize religious issues and their importance. Maddox describes public life in Australia as being not so much secular as "religiously innocent." (*ENI*)

Prominent Presbyterian theologian Robert McAfee Brown dies

Rev. Robert McAfee Brown, a Presbyterian theologian who played a prominent role in the ecumenical and liberation theology movements, died September 18 at a nursing home in Greenfield, Massachusetts. Brown began his career as a student of theology but widened his mission whenever he saw wrongs to right and causes to fight. He was jailed as a Freedom Rider during the U.S. civil rights movement, protested the Vietnam War and visited Central America during struggles there in the 1980s. He wrote extensively, taught at seminaries and secular universities and, for years, was a fixture at conferences of thinkers from many religions. (*The Globe and Mail*)

Churches call on EU to lead way in "environmental conversion"

An ambitious European Union (EU) strategy for sustainable development could be weakened unless it is matched by concrete proposals, two of Europe's leading church organizations have warned. The strategy, intended to help combat global warming and promote long-term improvements in transportation, public health and natural resources, was adopted at an EU summit in June. According to the Conference of European Churches and the Commission of the (Roman Catholic) Bishops' Conferences of the European Community, the adoption of this strategy was a "ground-breaking event" that will help promote policies that "reconcile the need for economic growth with social and environmental justice." (*ENI*)



SHERWOOD PARK CHURCH, a mission extension of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in Sherwood Park, Alta., recently moved into new facilities — the former Sherwood Park Funeral Home. Moving in the pulpit from St. Andrew's Church, Fort MacLeod, Alta., are (standing behind the pulpit) Rev. Glenn Ball and Jason Malo, and (left to right) Doug Harrison, Steve Wilson, John Ball, Jan Vogelaar, Ryan Giesbrecht, Greg Robinson and Bob Nicholson (the Men's Breakfast Group).



THE CONGREGATION AND SESSION OF Knox Church, Rodney, Ont., presented Alex James (centre) with a book and a certificate of recognition celebrating his 40 years as a faithful elder. Making the presentation were Earl Morden (left) and Rev. Duncan Colquhoun.



ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, Amherst Island, Ont., honoured 14 members who have served the congregation for more than 50 years. Pictured (L to R) are: (front row) Elaine Wolfreys, Chris Gregg, Madlyn Kerr and Syke Fleming; (back row) Marian Glenn, Ruth Drumgoole, Clinton Kilpatrick, Shirley Fleming, Vera Hogeboom and Helen Caughey. Absent were: Bruce Caughey (who has since passed away), Dorothy Kilpatrick, Helen Miller and Piet Witteveen.

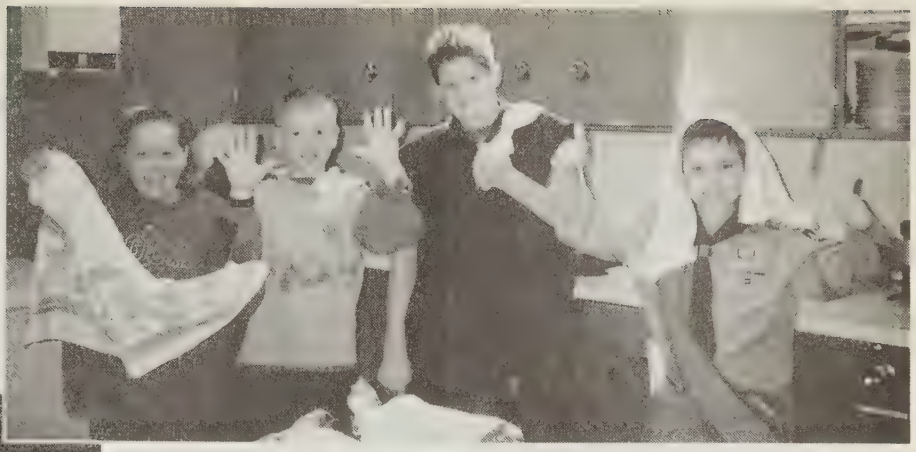
AN EASTER BANNER made by Sandy Collier, the third she has made for St. Andrew's Church, Ajax, Ont., is admired by June Soetens.



DURING A VISIT TO the Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington, Rev. Glen Davis, Moderator of the 126th General Assembly, was the special guest at a dinner held at St. Andrew's Church, Kitchener, Ont. With Glen is Margaret Bigelow, widow of Rev. Jesse Bigelow, Moderator of the 104th General Assembly.



Please note: Photos submitted for People & Places must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they are to be returned. Also, please try to ensure all pictures are clear and do not include a multitude of people. Colour or black-and-white photos are acceptable, but negatives and slides cannot be used. Thank you.



THE BOY SCOUTS OF Knox Church, Mitchell, Ont., helped to prepare and serve a hotdog lunch when Knox joined several other churches from the municipality of West Perth in holding luncheons after the worship service on Feb. 11 to raise money for earthquake relief in India. Trent Taylor (second from left) shows off his dishpan hands, while Kendall Cupskey (left), Tom Buurs and Jim Henderson (right) smile after a job well done. Proceeds from the luncheons and from special donations totalled $2,500.



A PULPIT BIBLE was presented to St. Andrew's Church, Welland, Ont., by Shirley Barnhart in memory of Pat Marshall, a longtime member of the congregation. Holding the Bible with Shirley (right) are clerk of session Linda Moore and Rev. Ron Sharpe.



REV. ANNE YEE-HIBBS is pictured with her husband, Rev. John Hibbs, at a reception held in her honour on her retirement as minister of Duff's Church, Puslinch, Ont.,



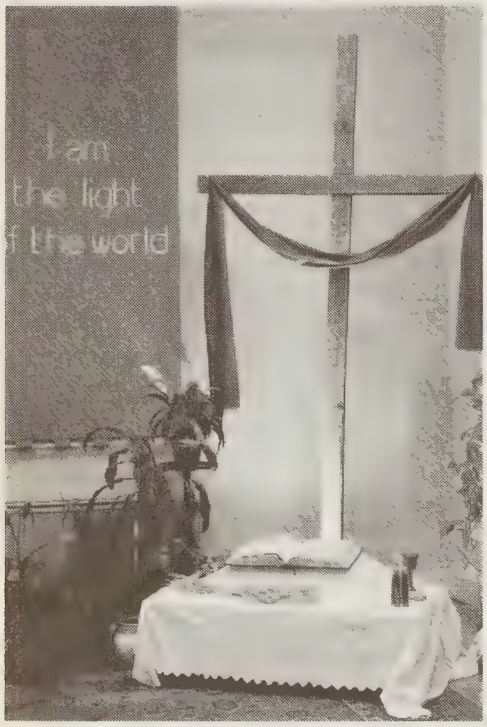
FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, the congregation of Richmond Church, Richmond, B.C., has decorated a floral cross on Easter Sunday, with worshippers each adding a flower as they arrive prior to the service. During the recessional hymn, the cross is carried outside the church for passers-by to enjoy. Shown adding their flowers to the cross are: Anne Beer (left); her daughter, Ainslee; and Dorothy McCarron.

THE PRIMARY CLASS AT the Church of Saint David, Halifax, presented a puppet show to the rest of the church school on the theme of "Discipleship." The puppets and props were made by the class members: (from left) Charlotte Taper, Jeff Taylor, Patrick MacKeigan, Margaret Campbell, Ashley Brooker, Samantha Kinley, with teachers Emma Whitley and John Wamboldt.





THE AFTERNOON CIRCLE of St. Timothy's Church, Ottawa, presented a skit at the congregation's annual amateur concert. Caught in the act are: clerk of session George McCully and (front row, L to R) Margaret Loveridge, June McCreadie (president), Lois de Beaupre, and (back row) Mariane MacDonald, Ruth Toller and Charlotte Craig.



THE BIBLE WAS READ from cover to cover when the local branch of the Canadian Bible Society hosted "Proclamation — the Word of the Lord 2001" at St. Andrew's Church, Sarnia, Ont. Beginning at Genesis on March 28 and ending with Revelation on April 6, volunteer readers read the Bible (in approximately five-minute segments) each day from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m.





THE "CONTINUING PRESBYTERIANS" of St. Stephen, N.B., were among the first in Canada to erect a new church after the Union vote of 1925, dedicating it on March 28, 1926. The St. Andrew's - St. Stephen pastoral charge recently marked the church's 75th anniversary with a special service. Clerk of session Georgia Roberts, who was the first child to be baptized in the building, is shown cutting the anniversary cake, flanked by Linda Perry (left) and Judy Wilson, who were once members of the junior choir.

THE WORSHIP SERVICE on May 27 at Deep River Community Church, Deep River, Ont., provided an opportunity to celebrate God's gifts of family and community as Freda and Arthur Boulton (pictured with Rev. Ruth Syme) observed their 70th wedding anniversary by renewing their marriage vows.



THE CONGREGATION OF St. Andrew's Memorial Church, Port Credit, Ont., experienced an impressive growth spurt last year when 78 new members were added to the role.



RAE WILLIAMSON of Knox Church, St. Thomas, Ont., (left) greets visitors participating in "a tour of five historic downtown St. Thomas churches" held April 22. Knox joined with four other churches (Anglican, Baptist, Roman Catholic and United), all established in the 1800s, to organize the event. More than 175 visitors enjoyed the self-guided tour, and a profit of $2,406 was shared equally by the five churches.



CHAMBIT CHURCH, MONTREAL, recently honoured Sid Williams, convener of the Presbytery of Montreal property committee and a member of Briarwood Church, Beaconsfield, Que., for his outstanding work in overseeing the restoration and renovation of the church manse. Shown thanking Sid are (L to R): Young Souk Cha, Hong Shik Kim and Rev. Timothy Hwang.



WARREN HILL OF St. Peter's Church, Madoc, Ont., was recognized for his 40 years as an elder of the congregation with the presentation of a plaque and a book (*Pioneering Spirit, Places of Worship, Then and Now*). With Warren is Rev. Stephen Thompson.



AN EVENING ENTITLED "Singing God's Praises" (rediscovering the joy of singing hymns) was held at Gloucester Church, Ottawa, with special guest John Bell, a minister of the Church of Scotland and the recipient of the 1999 E. H. Johnson Award. The Presbytery of Ottawa sponsored the event, with the assistance and co-operation of The Presbyterian College, Montreal, and Education for Discipleship. Pictured with the musical Mr. Bell (right) is Rev. Shaun Seaman, minister of Trinity Church, Kanata, Ont.



THE CONGREGATION OF Blair Church, Garden of Eden, N.S., celebrated the 90th birthday of its organist, Margaret Betts, at a recent church dinner. Margaret began to play the organ at Blair when she was 14 years old.

Tony Plomp

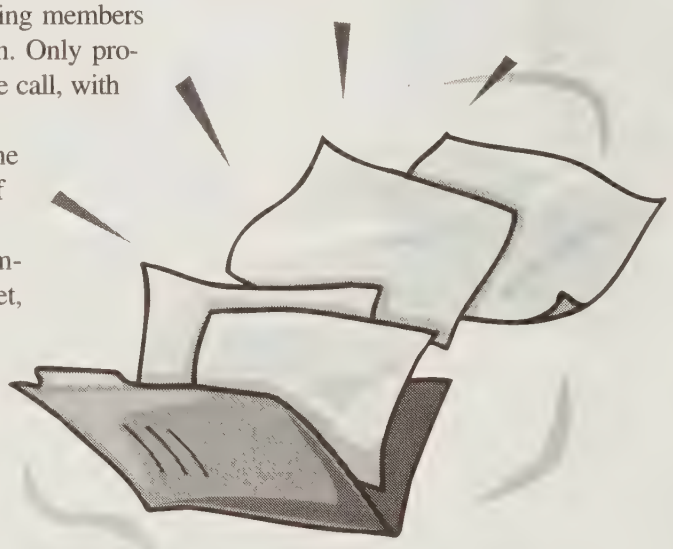


Playing the percentages

question: *Can presbytery place a call in the hands of a minister when there is no reliable professing membership number to be inserted in the call document?*

Prior to a call being presented to presbytery, the session needs to "purge the roll," as the old phrase has it. It needs to have a clear understanding of how many active, professing members there are in the congregation. Only professing members can sign the call, with adherents concurring.

Sometimes, we read in the annual statistical reports of the General Assembly that a congregation has 600 members, an impressive figure. Yet, we note the average weekly attendance is about 150. This would suggest the roll of professing members is grossly inflated. It is probably a fact only about 300 people in that congregation are professing members who worship with some degree of regularity and participate in the life and work of the congregation.



When the time comes for professing members to sign the call document, the session may well discover the call will be under-subscribed when, after much effort and chasing after a number of "delinquent" members, they come up with a figure of 300 people signing.

This poses a problem for presbytery. The subscription to a call by only 50 per cent of the official professing membership is problematic. Most presbyteries demand the call be signed by at least 80 per cent of the official membership. Unless the context for such a low subscription to the call can be fully and adequately explained to me, I would find myself, as a presbyter, unable to be part of a motion to "sustain this call as a true gospel call" and to place it into the hands of the candidate for the pulpit.

---

question: *Who should maintain custody and stewardship responsibility of legacies left for "general purposes of the congregation" with no specific limitations or directions? Is it the session, the board of managers or the board of trustees?*

It has been stated in decisions of the General Assembly that, in congregations of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the trustees are "a pen in the hand of the congregation." They do not have authority within themselves to sign any documents or engage in any transactions or take on any responsibilities unless so authorized by the congregation at a duly called and constituted congregational meeting.

So when your congregation is left a legacy of two million dollars "for general purposes," this money should be placed in a special account administered by the board of managers and the treasurer (or the finance and maintenance committee of session). Any call upon these funds should be approved by the congregation.

I understand there is a handful (one handful?) of congregations within our denomination that has, for some historical reason, been established in such a way that the trustees of the congregation apparently have more responsibility and power than is normative in most Presbyterian congregations. If there is some sort of secular legal requirement for the trustees to be so involved, then there is little, I suppose, that can be done about it except to trust the integrity and wisdom of the board of trustees that it will administer the monies under its care with prudence, in the spirit of Christian stewardship, and for the welfare of the church and all its life and work. R

Please send questions for Rev. Tony Plomp to tony_plomp@telus.net or 4020 Lancelot Dr., Richmond, B.C. V7C 4S3.

Kimchi and Maple Leaves under the Rising Sun: The Story of Canadian Presbyterian Involvement with the Korean Church in Japan *by Robert K. Anderson (Essence, 2001, $25). Reviewed by Ronald Wallace.*

Rev. Robert Anderson and his wife, Priscilla, served as missionaries with the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ) from 1966 to 1974 and 1977 to 1983. From the beginning, Anderson developed a strong interest in the history of the Korean Church in Japan. His research is based primarily on documentary sources such as minutes of the Federal Council of Churches and Missions in Korea, minutes and annual reports of the Presbyterian Mission Council in Japan, annual reports of the missionaries, and records of the deliberations of the Board of World Mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), supplemented by personal interviews with some key people involved.



Anderson describes two stages in the initial Christian mission to Koreans in Japan. First, a ministry beginning in the 1880s to Korean students going to Japan to pursue higher education. Then, following the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910 up to the beginning of the Second World War, to hundreds of thousands of Korean peasants, dispossessed of their traditional lands, who immigrated to Japan in search of work.

He describes the pioneer work of Rev. Luther Young, who arrived in Japan in 1927 under a joint appointment of the PCC and the Federal Council of Churches and Missions in Korea. The initial ministry of gathering the Korean Christians into congregations culminated in the formation of the self-governing, but not fully self-supporting, Chosen (Korean) Christian Church in 1934. Anderson counters the conception that this period in the history of the Korean Church in Japan was one of missionary dominance. He points out that, from the beginning, Young's ministry was overseen by Koreans, first by Koreans from the churches that were part of the federal council and then by the General Assembly of the Chosen Korean Church.

During the Second World War, the KCCJ was compelled to take part in a government enforced union of all Protestant churches in Japan. With the defeat of Japan and the liberation of Korea in 1945, most pastors and members of the pre-war Chosen Korean Church returned to Korea. The few who remained reorganized the church under Korean leadership and invited the Canadian missionaries to return, which they did. Anderson describes the tensions that characterized the early post-war period when an autonomous KCCJ was, nevertheless, heavily dependent upon Canadian funds administered by the revived mission council. He explains how this situation was eventually resolved by negotiation between the PCC and the KCCJ. An agreement made the KCCJ responsible for both overseeing the ministries of the Canadian missionaries working with them and administering whatever financial aid they might receive from the Canadian church.

Throughout his history of this ongoing relationship between the KCCJ and the PCC, Anderson seeks to relate his account to the wider context of Korean, Japanese, Canadian and world history, and to ongoing developments in the theology and practice of mission. The main weakness of the book is one on which Anderson comments: the nature of his sources. They are impersonal documents that tend to focus on the work being done with little personal detail about the people doing the work. Anderson's book tells much about the work of various Canadian missionaries who served with the Korean Church in Japan but, unfortunately, he is not able to tell much about them: what led them to go to Japan to work among the Koreans, what kept them there or caused them to return, or their hopes and joys, their sorrows and frustrations.

Despite this limitation, this is an important book. It is the first and only account of the missionary relationship between The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Korean Christian Church in Japan, bringing under one cover material that would otherwise be inaccessible to most readers. Anderson's book should be of interest not only to people in these two churches who have an interest in missions but also to scholars of mission who will find in this account a useful case study in mission history.

Ronald Wallace, a minister of St. Andrew's Church in Lindsay, Ontario, is a former missionary with the Korean Christian Church in Japan.

Generations: The game of Family fun! *(Familytime Products, Inc., 2000). Reviewed by Dorothy Henderson.*

Generations is a board card game played by three to six players or teams. The cards are a combination of memory (What was your grandmother's maiden name?) and perception (Which family member is most likely to wear plaids and stripes together?).

Each person or team writes an answer on a slip of paper. If two or more players write down the same answer, they move forward on the board. To most of the questions, there are no right or wrong answers. Instead, the "right" answer is the perception family members share.

We played *Generations* at Christmas with two different family groups and discovered these things:

- It was great fun and generated much laughter.
- Children younger than eight can play if they are paired with an older player.
- The game was definitely easier for older people with longer memories, but younger players had fun guessing at questions like "Who is your mother's favourite actor?"
- Even non-family members can play. For one game, we included visiting boyfriends of teen members of our family. Since the guests did not know family members well, we modified the rules to include only the people at the

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game table. Everyone then could guess at questions like "Which person at the table thinks he/she is a race car driver?"

This game got thumbs-up from me. It could be used at family gatherings, church family fun nights, at social events in nursing homes or hospitals, and anywhere intergeneration interaction needs a little structure.

Call toll-free 1-888-547-8899 or check the Web site www.generationsgame.com. The National Parenting Centre Seal of Approval.

Dorothy Henderson has responsibility for Christian education and ministry with children and youth at national church offices.

Famous Jerks of the Bible *by Margaret Brouillette (Broadman & Holman, 2001, $13.95). Reviewed by John Congram.*

Many readers will be familiar with the writing of Margaret Brouillette from her series in the *Record* on communicating the Christian faith to children. In this book, she attempts to help teen readers discover their own weaknesses and do something about them. To accomplish this, she has chosen a dozen "famous jerks" from the Bible. These are not any run-of-the-mill jerks but the genuine article: characters such as Nebuchadnezzar, Lot, Samson and Jezebel. She allows them to tell their own stories and then includes exercises to help readers discover their own flaws and do something about them.

"Jerks are everywhere — " she writes, "in your neighbourhood, on your team, in your club, at your school, at your church. And, unfortunately, sometimes in your mirror."

The Bible is also "loaded with jerks." God uses some despite their attitude. A few smarten up. Some never do. This book is designed to help readers leave their jerk factor behind them.

Margaret Brouillette is a teacher and writer who lives in Quebec.

Most books reviewed may be purchased through The Book Room, 50 Wynford Dr., North York, Ont. M3C 1J7. Prices include shipping and handling but not GST. Do not send payment with order. An invoice will follow. Please include name and location of congregation. Toll-free order line: 1-800-619-7301, ext. 301, e-mail: bookroom@presbyterian.ca.

DEATHS

COOPER, REV. DR. JACK, died at his home in Elmvale, Ontario, June 7, 2001. Born in Winnipeg in 1918, he was a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada from his ordination in 1954 to his retirement in 1981. He was predeceased by his wife of 57 years, Helen (Campbell), in 1998; their infant daughter, Catherine Marguerite, in 1957; and his sister Jean (Harry Fielder) of Vancouver in 1998. He is survived by three children: David (Linda) of Toronto; Glenn (Iona McLean) of Pictou, N.S.; Rachel (Steven Raven) of Cambridge, England; also by grandchildren John of Sarnia, Ont., David of Toronto, and Jonathan and Sarah of Toronto; also brothers Glenn and David (Norma) and sister Connie (Alan) McCaskill of British Columbia. Jack served as minister of Elmvale Church, Knox Church in Flos township and the Presbyterian church at Fergusonvale from 1954 to 1959. He spent the remainder of his ministry as a member of the executive staff at church offices in Toronto, most recently as general secretary of the Board of Ministry. When he retired, the General Assembly passed a minute of appreciation that referred to his "pioneering spirit" in the church and his "deep affection for the pastoral ministry." He was granted an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by Knox College, Toronto.

ANDERSON, DOUGLAS, 87, faithful member and elder of Avonton Church, Ont., died August 18, 2001.

CROSS, JOHN SAMUEL "SAM," 71, June 6, 2001. Faithful elder (clerk of session, presbytery representative), St. Andrew's, Roslin, Ont. Beloved husband of Betty, son-in-law to Lela, brother of Audentia and Maxine, father of Cheryl, Donna, Duane, Alan, 10 grandchildren. "Christ in you, the hope of Glory."

DRURY, CHRISTINE, 99, a longtime member, Women's Missionary Society, Ladies Aid Society and the Quilters Group of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

KISER, JENNIE, 98 years old, a longtime, faithful member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ontario.

MAIZE, ERIC, 78, faithful member for over 62 years, St. Andrew's, St. Lambert, Que., Sept. 1, 2001.

SHARPE, GORDON, 91 years old, a longtime, faithful member, elder for 55 years, of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

TAYTI, ZOLTAN "ZOLYI" C., Aug. 5, 2001. Member of Knox, Welland, Ont., 24 years. His Hungarian roots gave Zolyi an "old country zest for life." He will be remembered in the church for being committed (with his wife, Betty) to the founding and development of the girls vocational school in Dormaa, Ghana, Africa. A quiet man who let such works as the girls school witness to his love for his Lord.

YOUNG, MARY ELIZABETH "BETH" (DUGUID), wife of the late Rev. M.C. Young (1984), died in London, Ont., on August 29, in her 89th year. Mother of Doug Young and his wife, Rev. Barbara Young, of Sidney, B.C., and of John Young and his wife, Randi, of London, Ont. Predeceased by her daughter Susan. Grandmother of Heather Nicholas and her husband Adrian of Gabriola Island, B.C.; Jennifer Hopkins and her husband Paul, Steven Young and his wife Pearl, Allison Young, all of London; and Scott Young of Toronto. Also survived by six dearly loved great-grandchildren. Funeral service and interment were at The Old Stone Church, Beaverton, Ont., with her daughter-in-law, Rev. Barbara Young, officiating. "She has fought the good fight. She has finished the race. She has kept the faith."

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES and INTERIM MODERATORS

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Bass River, N.B., pastoral charge. Rev. Ralph MacKenzie, 106 Notre Dame, Atholville, N.B. E3N 3Z3.

Charlottetown, St. James (The Kirk). Rev. Harry Currie, 130 Victoria Rd., Summerside, P.E.I. C1N 2G5; 902-436-2557 (W); 902-888-3888 (H); kirkstjames@pei.sympatico.ca; www3.pei.sympatico.ca/kirkstjames.

Glace Bay, N.S., St. Paul's. Rev. Robert Lyle, 12 Lorway Ave., Sydney, N.S. B1P 4Z2; 902-564-4001; rdarjlyle@email.msn.com.

Hanwell (Fredericton), N.B., St. James. Rev. Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1M2; 506-455-8220; sapc@nbnet.nb.ca.

Montague, P.E.I., St. Andrew's; Cardigan, St. Andrew's. Rev. Roger MacPhee, Belfast Post Office, Belfast, P.E.I. C0A 1A0.

North Sydney, Cape Breton, N.S., St. Giles. Rev. Kenneth MacRae, 3 Queen St., Sydney Mines, N.S. B1V 1K4; 902-736-6394; kmacrae@ns.sympatico.ca.

Riverview, N.B., Bethel. Rev. Martin Kreplin, 90 Park St., Moncton, N.B. E1C 2B3.

Saint John, N.B., St. Columba. Rev. Ted Thompson, 101 Coburg St., Saint John, N.B. E2L 3B7; 506-634-7765.

Springhill, N.S., St. David's; Oxford, St. James; Riverview, St. Andrew's. Rev. Kevin Steeper, RR 2, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0; 902-485-8944; thesteepers@auracom.com.

St. John's, Nfld., St. David's (effective March 1, 2002). Rev. Ian S. Wishart, 98 Elizabeth Ave., St. John's, Nfld. A1A 1R8.

Woodstock, N.B., St. Paul's. Rev. Dr. Paul A. Brown, 23 Welsford Station Rd., Welsford, N.B. E5K 1A5; (506) 486-1084

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Fort-Coulonge, Que., St. Andrew's; Bristol, Bristol Memorial. Rev. Milton A. Fraser, 80 Daniel St. N, Arnprior, Ont. K7S 2K8; 613-623-5531; standrew@storm.ca.

Melbourne, Que., St. Andrew's. Rev. Ross Davidson, 702 rue Lafontaine, Thetford Mines, Que. G6G 3J6; jrhdavidson@globetrotter.net.

Montreal, Cote Des Neiges. Rev. Dr. Clyde Ervine, The Presbyterian College, 3495 University St., Montreal, Que. H3A 2A8.

Montreal, Robert Campbell Taiwanese (half-time, English/Taiwanese bilingual assistant). Rev. Harry Kuntz, 92 Rockwyn Ave., Pointe Claire, Que. H9R 1W2.

Morrisburg, Ont., Knox; Dunbar, Dunbar Church. Rev. Mark Bourgon, PO Box 220, Finch, Ont., K0C 1K0; 613-984-0772; mbourgon@glen-net.ca.

Sherbrooke-Lennoxville, Que., St. Andrew's (effective by April 30, 2002). Contact: Mrs. Marlene Cox, 470 Swede Rd., Waterville, Que. J0B 3H0; 819-837-2086; triplejcox@sympatico.ca.

Stittsville (Ottawa), St. Andrew's. Rev. Tony Boonstra, 2 Church St., PO Box 498, Stittsville, Ont. K2S 1A6; boonstra@cyberus.ca.

Synod of Toronto and Kingston

Ajax, St. Andrew's. Rev. E.J. Briard, 255 Wright Cres., Ajax, Ont. L1S 5S5.

Ajax, St. Timothy's. Rev. Phillip Robillard, 447 Port Union Rd., Toronto, Ont. M1C 2L6; philrob@grace.on.ca; fax 416-284-8560.

Angus, Zion. Rev. Carol Smith, PO Box 354, Cookstown, Ont. L0L 1L0; bicpc@bconex.net.

Cambridge, St. Andrew's Hespeler. Rev. Wayne Dawes, 2 Grand Ave. S, Cambridge, Ont. N1S 2L2.

Cambridge, St. Giles. Rev. Linda Ashfield, 50 Erb St. W, Waterloo, Ont. N2L 1T1; ashfield@nonline.net.

Campbellford, St. Andrew's; Burnbrae, St. Andrew's. Rev. George Turner, 120 Murray St., Peterborough, Ont. K9H 2S5.

Colborne, Old St. Andrew's; Brighton, St. Andrew's. Rev. Doug Brown, 200 King St. W, Cobourg, Ont. K9A 2N1.

The Transitions column welcomes announcements of special events such as births, marriages, anniversaries, graduations, baptisms and the reception of new members, as well as death notices. The rate is $1 per word or $50 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.
All notices of pulpit vacancies, recognitions, ordinations and inductions will be charged to the congregation: $10 for the basic notice and $1 per word for additional information. (There will be no charge to congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.)
Contact the *Record* office regarding all items for the Transitions column.

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QUILTER, HUSBAND, SON, and dog would like to rent a cottage in the Alberta or Saskatchewan area for three weeks in July 2002. Payment can be a queen-size quilt or cash. Please call Lorna at 780-417-5001 or e-mail: sherwoodparkpresby@home.com.

RESEARCHER is taking a snapshot of how Canadian church responded to Sept. 11 events. Wants Sermons Preached and Worship Resources used in congregations Sunday, Sept. 16 and Sunday, Sept. 23. Please send to: Peter Bush, Box 235, Mitchell, ON N0K 1N0. Inquiries: 519-348-9080 or <knoxmit@quadro.net>.

SAINT COLUMBA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH is seeking a permanent Minister who is energetic and forward-thinking to bring our small congregation to its full potential. We hope God is calling you to us. Contact our Interim Moderator: Rev. Ted Thompson, 101 Coburg St., Saint John, New Brunswick E2L 3B7. E-mail: tedt@nbnet.nb.ca.

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Answers to Presbyterian quiz

from page 34

1. (b) the Huguenots from France
2. (c) also Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald
3. (d) Quebec City
4. (a) John Geddie who was sent to the New Hebrides
5. (a) James Robertson

transitions

continued

Crieff, Knox (half-time). Rev. Thomas J. Kay, 20 Quebec St., Guelph, Ont. N1H 2T4; thomas@knoxguelph.ca.

Elmvale, Elmvale Church; Flos, Knox. Rev. Deborah Dolbear-Van Bilsen, 208 Mosley St., Wasaga Beach, Ont. L0L 2P0; wbpres@georgian.net.

Etobicoke (Toronto), Albion Gardens (half-time minister). Rev. Brian Ross, 1579 Royal York Rd., Toronto, Ont. M9P 3C5.

Etobicoke, Mimico. Rev. Susanne Rescorl, 680 Annette St., Toronto, Ont. M6S 2C8; 416-767-2689; fax 416-767-1229.

Fenelon Falls, St. Andrew's; Glenarm, Knox. Rev. Doug Scott, RR 1, 22 Hillview Dr., Bobcaygeon, Ont. K0M 1A0.

Fergus, St. Andrew's. Rev. Linda Bell, 2 Cross St., Elmira, Ont. N3B 2S4; drbell@execulink.com.

Guelph, St. Andrew's (two ministers). Rev. Angus Sutherland, 75 Grand Ave. N, Cambridge, Ont. N1S 2L1; ajmacbagpipe@yahoo.com.

Maple, St. Andrew's. Rev. Bryn MacPhail, Box 164, 19 Stewart St., Beeton, Ont. L0G 1A0; 905-729-0055; bmacphal@netrover.com.

Markham, Chapel Place. Rev. George Beals, 10058 Yonge St., Richmond Hill, Ont. L4C 1T8. Potential candidates must have an intimate knowledge of Middle Eastern culture and be thoroughly fluent in Arabic and English.

Nobleton, St. Paul's. Rev. Sam Priestley, 143 Main St. N, Markham, Ont. L3P 1Y2.

Norval, Norval Church; Union Church. Rev. Mary Campbell, 22 James St., Georgetown, Ont. L7G 2H4; 905-877-8855; mcampbell@aztec-net.com.

Oakville, Hopedale. Rev. Glen Soderholm, PO Box 235, Campbellville, Ont. L0P 1B0.

Orillia, Orillia (St. Andrew's). Rev. Donald McKillican, 99 Peter St. N, Orillia, Ont. L3V 4Z3.

Orillia, St. Mark's. Rev. Carey Nieuwhof, RR 1, Comp. 126, Hawkestone, Ont. L0L 1T0; cnieuwhof@trinitycommunity.org; 705-487-1998.

Port Carling, Knox; Torrance, Zion. Rev. Michael Barnes, 45 McMurray St., Bracebridge, Ont. P1L 2A1; 705-645-4521.

Puslinch, Duff's. Rev. Don McCallum, 795 Scottsdale Dr., Guelph, Ont. N1G 3R8.

Scarborough, Clairlea Park (part-time). Rev. Gerard Bylaard, 3817 Lawrence Ave. E, Toronto, Ont. M1G 1R2.

Scarborough, Westminster. Rev. Wallace Whyte, 20 Guildwood Pkwy. #1104, Toronto, Ont. M1E 5B6; w.g.whyte@sympatico.ca.

Schomberg, Emmanuel (half-time). Rev. Chris Carter, 13190 Keele St., King City, Ont. L7B 1J2; 905-833-2325; carter@istar.ca.

Toronto, Calvin. Rev. G. Cameron Brett, 75 Simcoe St., Toronto, Ont. M5J 1W9; cbrett@standrewstoronto.org.

Toronto, Rosedale. Rev. Charlotte Stuart, 129 Mount Pleasant Rd., Toronto, Ont. M4W 2S3; rpcmain@interlog.com.

Toronto, St. Giles Kingsway. Rev. Will Ingram, 4 Morningside Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6S 1C2; 416-766-4765.

Toronto, Toronto Korean (full-time associate minister in charge of English-speaking ministry). Rev. Cheol Soon Park, 67 Scarsdale Rd., North York, Ont. M3B 2R2; 416-447-5963.

Uptergrove, Knox; East Oro, Essen; Jarratt, Willis. Rev. Tim Purvis, Box 26, Stayner, Ont. L0M 1S0; seraph@sympatico.ca.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Ailsa Craig, Ailsa Craig Church (one-year interim ministry). Rev. Ed Musson, c/o Mrs. Adele McCallum, Box 107, Ailsa Craig, Ont. N0M 1A0; adelemccallum@sympatico.ca.

Amherstburg, St. Andrew's. Rev. Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9E 1Z5; 519-972-3627.

Appin, Appin Church; Melbourne, Guthrie. Rev. Brian Nichol, RR 1, Dutton, Ont. N0L 1J0; 519-762-3724; revrev@webgate.net.

Ashfield, Ashfield Church; Ripley, Knox. Rev. Harvey Osborne, Box 399, Teeswater, Ont. N0G 2S0; 519-392-6955; osborne@scsinternet.com.

Beamsville, St. Andrew's; Smithville. Rev. Donna J. Riseborough, 202-2 Ferndale Ave., St. Catharines, Ont. L2P 3X8; driseborough@sympatico.ca.

Beechwood, St. Andrew's; Centre Road, Knox; Kerwood, West Adelaide. Rev. Kristine O'Brien, 152 Albert St., Strathroy, Ont. N7G 1V5; kristine@golden.net.

Chatham, St. James. Rev. Ian McDonald, 60 Fifth St., Chatham, Ont. N7M 4V7; 519-352-2313; i.mcdonald@sympatico.ca.

Dresden, St. Andrew's; Rutherford, Rutherford Church. Rev. Evelyn Carpenter, 60 Fifth St., Chatham, Ont. N7M 4V7; 519-352-2313; ecarpenter@auracom.com.

London, Elmwood Avenue. Rev. Andrew Human, 55 Hincks St., St. Thomas, Ont. N5R 3N9; revhuman@execulink.com.

Milverton, Burns; North Mornington. Search Committee, 66 Main St. N, Milverton, Ont. N0K 1M0.

Monkton, Knox; Cranbrook, Knox. Rev. Peter Bush, Box 235, Mitchell, Ont. N0K 1N0; 519-348-9080; knoxmit@quadro.net.

Point Edward, Point Edward Church (part-time). Rev. James Sloan, 268 Dantiki Ct., Corunna, Ont. N0N 1G0.

Priceville, St. Andrew's (half-time). Rev. Scott Sinclair, 865 Second Ave. W, Owen Sound, Ont. N4K 4M6.

Stratford, Knox. Rev. Rick Horst, PO Box 247, St. Marys, Ont. N4X 1B1.

Thamesville, St. James; Duart. Rev. Jack Neil, Box 1148, Ridgetown, Ont. N0P 2C0; 519-674-3487.

Wallaceburg, Knox (June 1, 2002). The Search Committee, Knox Presbyterian Church, 251 Duncan St., Wallaceburg, Ont. N8A 5G5; Office 519-627-4367 or 519-627-0842; fax 519-627-9480; knox@kent.net.

Windsor, Chinese (Cantonese-speaking, part-time). Rev. Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9E 1Z5.

Windsor, St. Andrew's (second full-time ordained staff position). Rev. Jeff Loach, 405 Victoria Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9A 4N1; loach@jet2.net.

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called to wonder

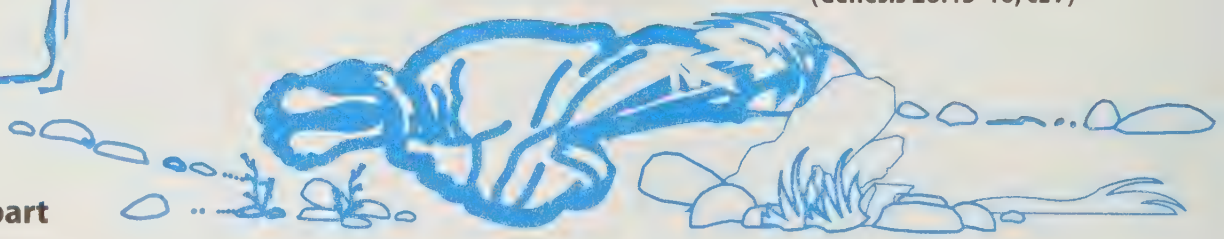
Written by Jennifer O'Farrell, St. Mark's Church, Don Mills, Ont.



God is in
God is out
God is always
All about.
Good is up
Good is down
Good is always
All around.

Long ago, I learned this prayer-poem. Longer ago, while on a journey, a man named Jacob discovers something new about God. At sunset, he takes a rock as a pillow and sleeps outdoors. He has a wonderful dream about a ladder that goes up to heaven. He hears God say, *"Wherever you go, I will watch over you."* When Jacob wakes up, he thinks to himself, *"The Lord is in this place and I didn't even know it."*

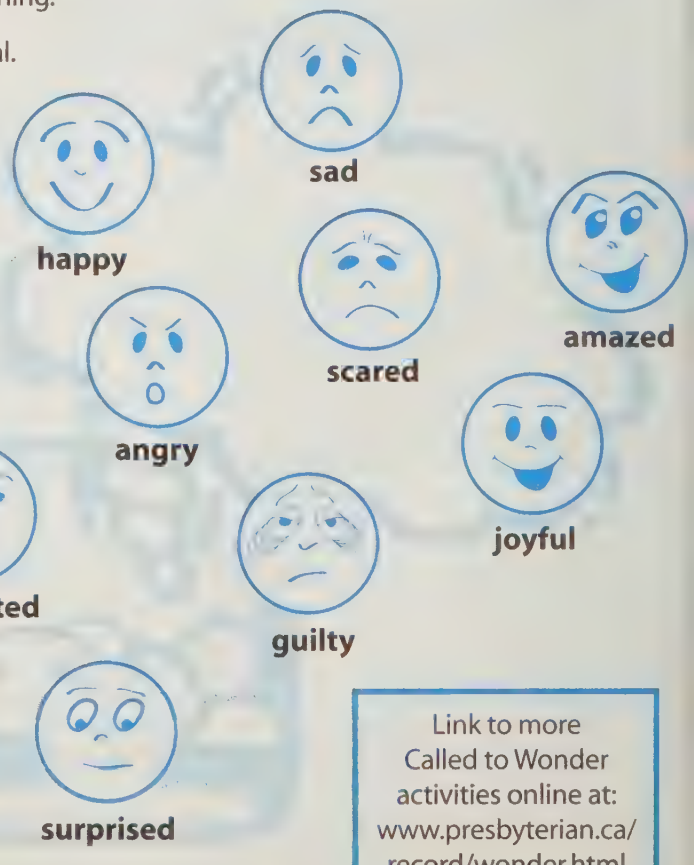
(Genesis 28:15-16, *CEV*)



Dreams play an important part in another Bible story.

Daniel is able to do amazing things! Have you heard about Daniel in the lions den? My favourite story is when the king wants to learn the meaning of a dream. He asks the court advisers and counsellors, the magicians and sorcerers, the wisest in all of Babylon. The king will not tell anyone what happened in his dream and, yet, he wants to hear about the dream and to be told what the dream means. With God, all things are possible, and Daniel does the impossible. Daniel has a dream in which God tells him the king's dream and also its meaning.

Do you remember your dreams? Try keeping a dream journal. Use a notebook or blank book. Place the journal near your bed, along with a pencil and, maybe, a flashlight. When you wake up, write down what you recall. It may take some practice. Perhaps you will remember people or things, or maybe the actions or activities. How did you feel in your dream? Happy, sad, scared, excited … ?

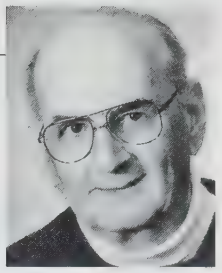


As November begins, most of us have just gone through a seasonal time change. We notice more darkness as the days move toward the winter solstice. At this dark time of year, it is reassuring to remember that God, "the source of wisdom and knowledge," is with us in darkness and in light. Daniel prays: "Our God, your name will be praised forever and forever … You explain deep mysteries, because even the dark is light to you" (Daniel 2:19-23, *CEV*).

As November ends, be alert for the **dreams** that may be mentioned in the Bible readings at your church during the Advent season ahead. If you wish to check them out, look at these *Christmas* Bible passages: Matthew 1:20, Matthew 2:12-13, Matthew 2:19, Matthew 2:22.

Link to more Called to Wonder activities online at: www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html

R. Sheldon MacKenzie



Paradise

"Paradise is even more boring than they said it was before we moved here"

Just beyond the boundaries of St. John's in Newfoundland (a city voted by a national magazine as the most interesting city in Canada), there is the largely bedroom community of Paradise. At one time, it had been a small village. Then came development. For several years, the new Paradise had all the growing pains of every new suburban development. All the amenities urban people take for granted had put a strain on the one-time village of Paradise.

New roads, streets and sidewalks had to be constructed. And, so, all summer long, there was a large sign at the entrance to the new development: DRIVE CAREFULLY. ROAD TO PARADISE UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

At one time, we knew Paradise well. When our daughter was a teenager, her music teacher and some good friends moved there from the city. One of these young people, a classmate, had been used to all the teenage activities in St. John's. He had gone to a city school where he was a popular person. He had been active in the YMCA and other community sponsored organizations for young people.

After he had been in Paradise a few months, he and one or other of our two young people were having a long teenage telephone conversation. During the conversation, he was asked whether he liked living in his new home. He replied: "Paradise is a boring place. It is even more boring than they said it was before we moved here!"

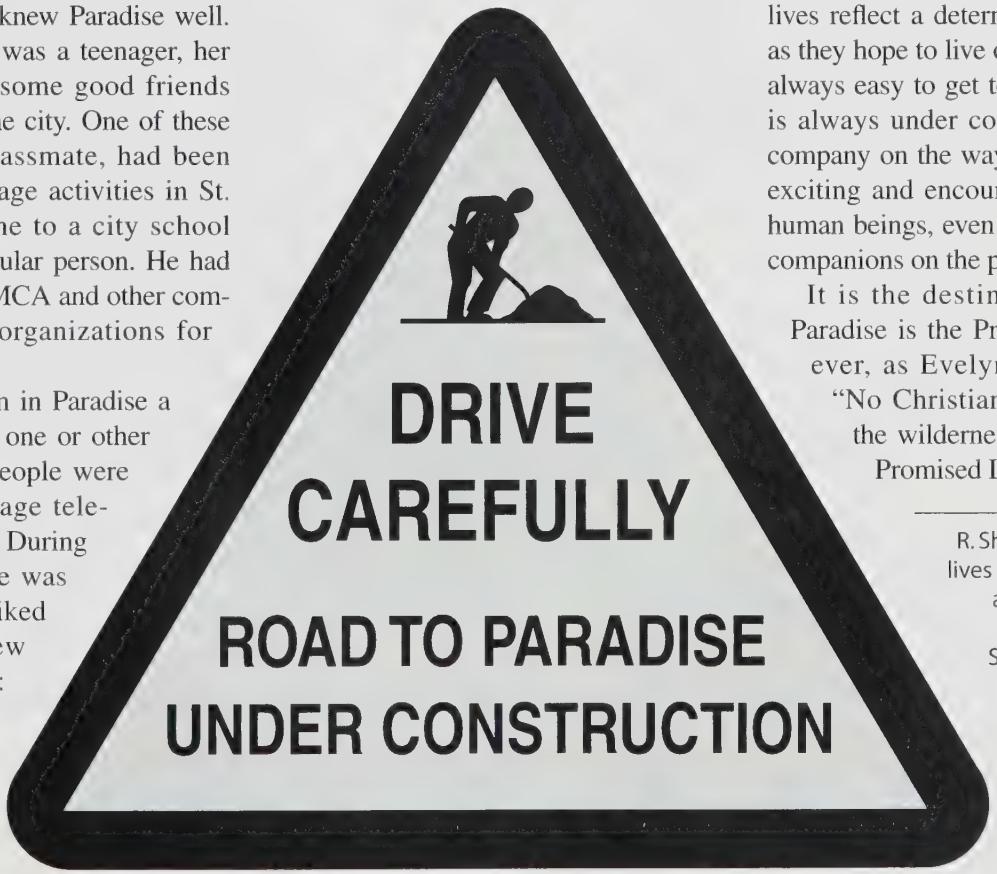
Poor lad! Paradise was a great disappointment to him. It was not at all what he expected nor, in his mind, as it ought to have been. Paradise was not an interesting place in which to live. According to this young fellow, not only was it difficult to get there, it was disappointing and boring once you had arrived.

"Paradise" is a very old word. It originated in old Persia, modern Iran. It began as a word for an enclosure or a wooded park. Over time, words and ideas change in meaning. (We need only think of the word "love" and the changes it has undergone, even from the past century.) When our spiritual ancestors, the Hebrew people, used the word Paradise, it referred to the Garden of Eden in some circles. And the Garden was the place to which the righteous went after death. And in which they waited for the resurrection.

When Christians took up the word — it appears only three times in the New Testament — its meaning changed only slightly, to refer to the place where the righteous dwell in the presence of God. It is the place to which the dying thief would go with Jesus. The only person who claimed to have had a vision of Paradise was Paul.

Paradise is not the inherited right of anyone. It is reserved for those whose lives reflect a determination to live now as they hope to live one day. And it is not always easy to get to Paradise. The road is always under construction. And our company on the way may not always be exciting and encouraging. Very fallible human beings, even at their best, are our companions on the pilgrimage.

It is the destination that counts. Paradise is the Promised Land. However, as Evelyn Underhill wrote: "No Christian escapes a taste of the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land." R



R. Sheldon MacKenzie, who lives in New Glasgow, N.S., is a retired professor from Memorial University in St. John's, and a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

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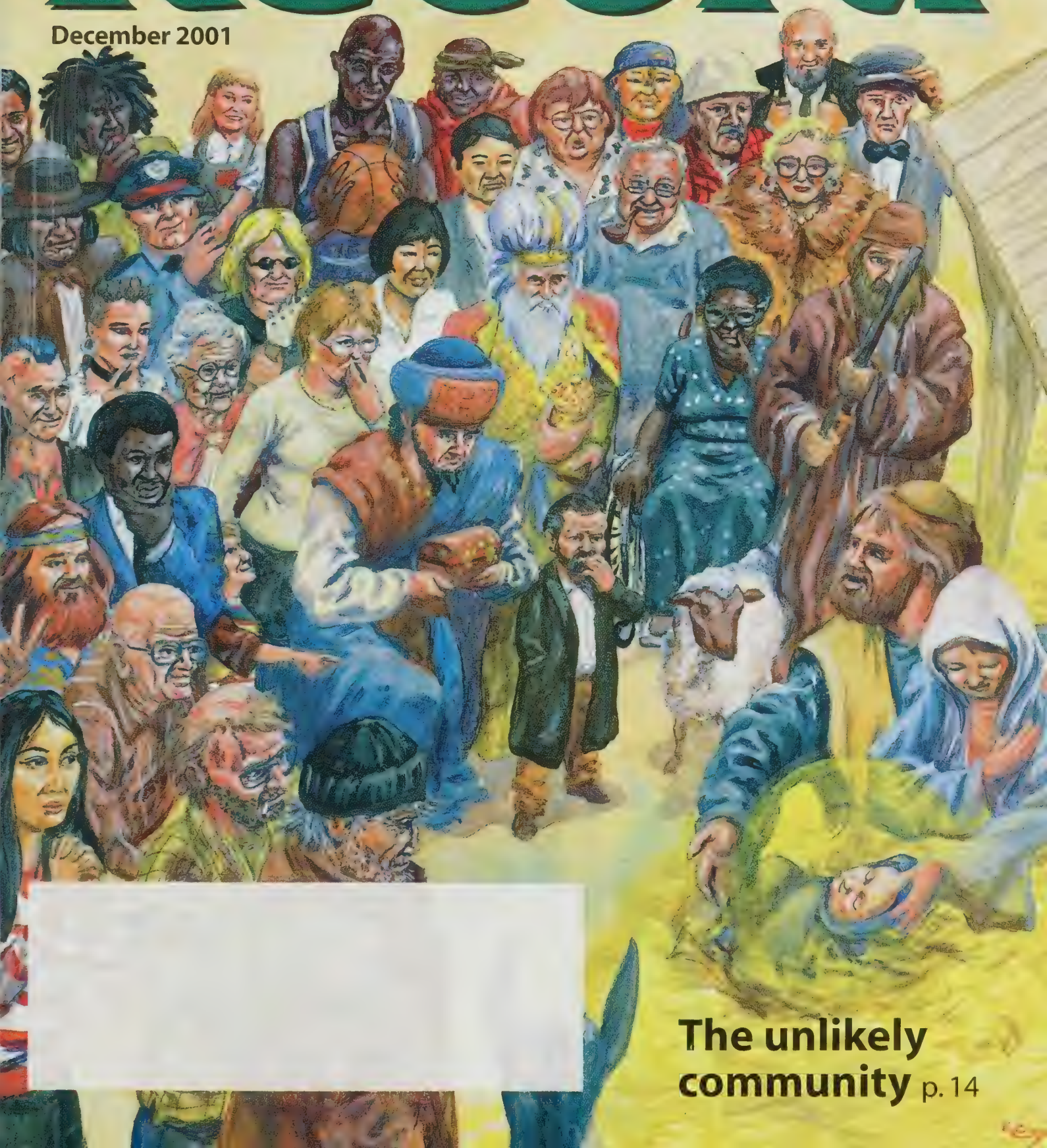
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Record

December 2001



The unlikely community p. 14

Miss Velma Westbury used to say, "If you just love the folks what's easy to love, that really ain't no love at all." She said, "If you love one, you have to love 'em all." That is the radical message of Easter. That is the glad tidings of Christmas. Of course, some folks said Miss Velma was crazy.

— Will Campbell in *Soul Among Lions*

Typo

Last Christmas season, one church secretary received plenty of teasing for this typo in a church bulletin. It seems one of the hymns was listed as "Angels We Have Heard Get High."

— Presbyterian Outlook

E-mail to Jesus

Reflecting on Christmas, my five-year-old daughter said, "Mom, we forgot to send a Christmas card to Jesus."

"That's a good idea," I responded. "Do you know his address?"

She gave me that don't-you-know-anything look and said, "I think you'd just send it to www.jesus.com."

— Cindi Longworth in *Presbyterians Today*

Bertie Felstead, the last known surviving member of the First World War British battalion that laid down its weapons to play soccer with the Germans in a spontaneous and long-remembered Christmas truce of 1915, died July 22, 2001, in Gloucester, England. He was 106.

WWI Christmas truce

Dearest Mother,

I am writing this in the trenches in my "dug-out" — with a wood fire going and plenty of straw. It is rather cozy, although it is freezing cold and real Christmas weather. I think I have seen one of the most extraordinary sights today that anyone has ever seen. About 10 o'clock this morning, I was peeping over the parapet when I saw a German waving his arms and, presently, two of them got out of their trenches and came towards ours — we were just going to fire on them when we saw that they had no rifles, so one of our men got out to meet them. In about two minutes the ground between the two lines of trenches was swarming with men and officers of both sides, shaking hands and wishing each other a happy Christmas. This continued for about half an hour when most of the men were ordered back to the trenches.

— 2nd Lt. Dougan Chater, 2/Gordon Highlanders

Christmas scene in a mall

Perhaps too many times before; it is so old, so worn, so overly familiar we can't hear it anymore. It is blunt, irrelevant. At best, it's merely cute. A friend told me about a Christmas display she saw at the mall: giant plush bears robed as Mary and Joseph, beaming at a swaddled Baby Jesus bear in the manger. If there was once grand mystery around the Incarnation, it has long since dispersed. Three jolly bears now convey everything we know or expect to know. It is a scene that is plump with stupidity. Jesus as a cookie. God as a pet.

This is very bad news.

— Frederica Mattewes-Green in "A Cold Day in December"

Do not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead.

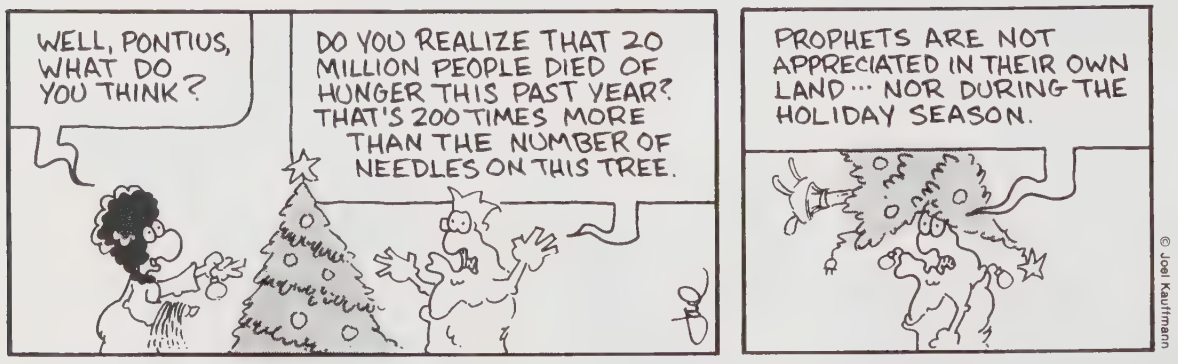
— Henry Ward Beecher

Not very religious

A year or so back, I saw a cartoon depicting a street where almost every house was adorned with icicle lights, decorated trees, reindeer and sleighs on the roof, etc. All except for one house that had a muted display of a simple crèche. Caption, from one passer-by to another: "I guess they're not very religious."

— John Francis on the Internet

Pontius' Puddle



John Congram



For those who live in hell this Christmas

"BETHLEHEM, West Bank, Oct. 21 — Apple-cheeked Johnny Thalgieh, an altar boy who hoped to become a priest, died near the place he loved best.

"His blood still cakes the polished paving stones a few paces from Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity, considered the birthplace of Jesus, where Johnny spent most of his life.... "

This article from the *Washington Post* goes on to describe how Johnny was playing with his four-year-old cousin Michael outside the church when a large-calibre, stray bullet, apparently fired from an Israeli position on a ridge a half-mile away, struck and killed him on the spot. "Johnny cried out. He fell, rolled three times and died on the spot." People living in the Middle East must often feel they are living in hell and wonder why God allows the situation to continue.

A person once confronted me with the question, "Do you believe God sends people to hell?" Recognizing a trick question when I heard it, I paused for a moment before answering. "Only if they insist on going," I finally replied.

On further reflection, I tend to agree with myself. I cannot conceive of God taking any pleasure in consigning anyone to hell whatever your description of hell might be. Nor can I conceive of a God who engineered the September 11 attacks to teach a lesson to a morally bankrupt nation. Nor a God who takes any pleasure or has any purpose in the death of Afghani innocents or all those who continue to perish in the Middle East. Yet, many seem determined to establish hell on earth. And, sometimes, it seems, God is determined to let them.

Many of the traditional pictures of hell as a place of foul creatures with tails and pitchforks, like the mythical apple of the Garden of Eden, have their source more in imaginative writings and paintings than in the Bible. The Westminster Confession, while conceiving hell as a place rather than a condition, to its credit, limits its statements about hell to what the Bible says: a place of "torments and utter darkness." We have seen what hell looks like in the heart of New York City. But before that, too, although we were less moved, in places like Rwanda where 800,000 people were slaughtered in three weeks.

This year, more than the usual number of folk will be spending Christmas in hell, either of their own making or consigned there by the actions of others. Relatives and friends of those lost in the September terrorist attack, Afghani innocents and, yes, Johnny Thalgieh's family and friends, along with countless others who live near to where Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

I once preached an Easter sermon entitled "Where in hell are you this Easter?" It was about folk who, despite the Resurrection proclamations and Easter lilies, feel as if they are living in hell. About a year later, a friend approached me to say he had been told that I preached a Christmas sermon entitled "To hell with Christmas." A few misplaced words can make a vast difference. Little things can often do that — like a baby born in a stable or a teenager shot 2,000 years later outside the place where Jesus was born.

Despite the commercialism of Christmas, few of us believe this season is so God-forsaken that it should be consigned to hell. Nevertheless, Christmas is a season when many experience the ravages of hell — a terrible sense of aloneness, hopelessness and lostness.

"At Johnny's wake ... his father, Joseph Thalgieh, sat beside a black-hatted priest at the Greek Orthodox Club, a block from Manger Square. Unshaven, his eyes red-rimmed and raw, he greeted mourners in a hoarse voice and tried to make sense of his son's death.

" 'He wanted to be a priest, go to theological school,' said Joseph Thalgieh. 'There is no sense to make out of this, except it's a vicious crime. We can't even say that it's God's will or fate.... ' "

And he was right, of course. There is no sense, and it is not God's will. We can only hope and pray that Jesus, who came not simply to prevent people from going to hell but to deliver them from the present hell they may be living in, will do the same for Johnny's family. For it is for them and for all of us who at times experience God forsakeness that the dear Child enters in.

John Congram

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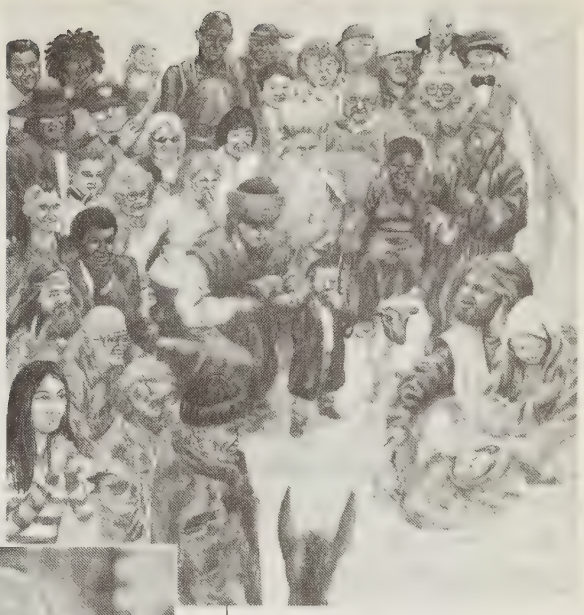
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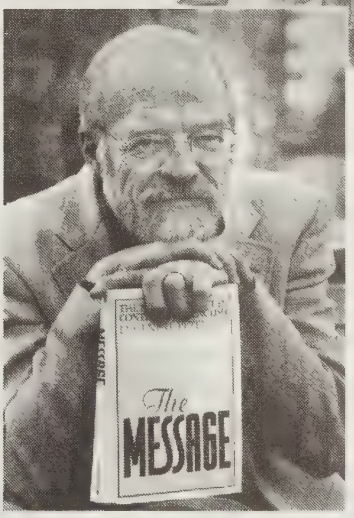
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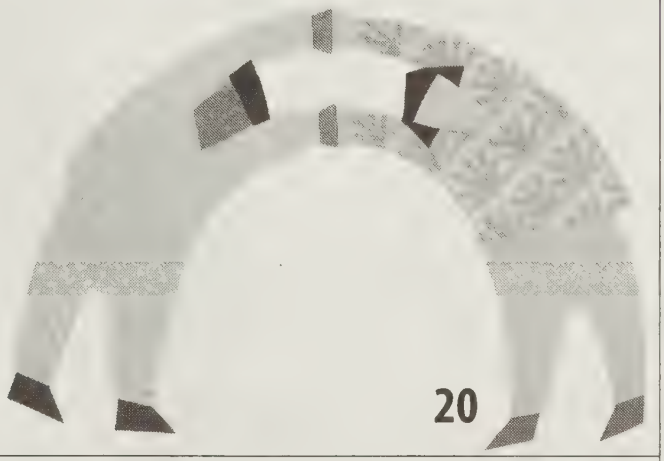
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our cover

Painting by Claudio Ghirardo.

Suicide

I respond to the two items on suicide in the October *Record* as a survivor of suicide. My husband committed suicide at age 41. I was left to pick up the pieces. He suffered depression and was on medication but had stopped taking it for an extended period. By the time he realized he was in trouble and started his medication again, the dosage was insufficient to boost his serotonin to the proper level. He was a man of great talent, seemingly happy with life on the outside, never giving any indication of suicidal thoughts or actions. Even our family doctor missed the hidden signs.

The stigma attached to suicide is unacceptable. People speak freely of death by cancer, liver failure and heart attack but not about suicide. Suicide is the end result of a disease known as depression. It is treatable with drugs, though many times it is difficult to find the most effective treatment in time. We should speak freely about suicide. Wisdom comes through knowledge. We need to offer our children knowledge about depression and suicide.

I shock many people when I tell them my husband committed suicide. However, for the sake of my children, it is more important to me that their peers see I do not attach a stigma to his death; he is simply their father who died. I believe this is how God sees him. Never once have I doubted that the Lord received my husband into his loving arms and forgave him.

My greatest shock throughout this trial came when I spoke of my husband's suicide and so many people came forward and told me of their father, friend, mother or cousin who had also committed suicide. It was like opening a wellspring. Suicide should be talked about. It is the only way to heal.

I was privileged to take part in a suicide support group called The Last Letter led by Cheryl McQueen of Dundas, Ontario. Without this support and God's, I would not have survived. Talk about suicide. It will save someone's life!

Faye Leger,
Temagami, Ont.

We publish as many letters as possible. All are subject to editing for meaning and space, and must include the correspondent's name and full address. Letters are intended to provide for the wide expression of views among our readers. Publication does not imply endorsement by either the *Record* or The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Gloria Troyer's "Does God love Gabe?" is a sensitive treatment of a difficult dilemma.

Social work professor Bill Ryan of McGill University, Montreal, a noted Canadian counsellor and researcher, has said gay teenage boys are seven times more likely than heterosexual males to make a serious suicide attempt. Further, Ryan's research shows that the four places where gay teens say they look for help and support — family, school, youth group and church — are the very places where they experience the most emotional pain.

Can parents and leaders say to gay teens, "Whether you are straight, gay or bisexual, we love you and affirm and support you"? If we can, this could eliminate much grief. If we cannot, we need further education. Gay children are not abnormal or sick. They, like our straight children, are gifts from God.

Eldon Hay,
Sackville, N.B.



An overly seeker-sensitive church.

Looking back

Kathy Cawsey's article "Looking back" (October *Record*) is courageous. There is, however, one major flaw in it. The many atrocities attributed to "Christians" have nothing to do with the fact that people believed they were right as Christians but simply that they failed to obey the commandments of Jesus. This statement can be made irrespective of the cultural conditions of any age. And it started right after the ascension of the Son of God. Jesus' charge to humanity is clear (Matthew 22:37-40, 26:52).

Cawsey ends with the statement "I think I am right — but I may be wrong." Simply: any action that does not meet unconditionally Jesus' Great Commandments (Matthew 22:37-40) is wrong.

I wish the church would be unequivocal about this rather than finding all

kinds of legal interpretations to "stay out of trouble with the regimes of the day." Bonhoeffer did it. He paid a tremendous price: his life. I am not sure I would be up to this task. But as long as we skirt around Jesus' demands, we will continue to commit atrocities in the name of God.

Dieter S. Leidel,
Barrie, Ont.

Kathy Cawsey's self-righteous, intolerant, militant comments are simply disgusting. Not to mention, they are out-dated, biased and childish.

Les Vegvari,
Guelph, Ont.

I commend Kathy Cawsey for telling it like it is. She is right: as times change, our understanding of Scripture and theology also changes.

She lays out a good foundation for her argument. However, when she trots out a host of "shoulds" and musts" to make us feel guilty, she is using the same overbearing, heavy-handed tactics she has just condemned.

As Cawsey points out, it is when we are dead certain we are right that we are usually wrong. She says, "They were so sure of themselves, they were willing to kill." In truth, they were unwilling to follow Jesus' example. They were also afraid to admit they might be wrong. Fear makes us do terrible things to ourselves and to others.

I certainly identified with the last sentence: "I think I am right — but I may be wrong." Way to go, Kathy!

Mary Wilton,
Oshawa, Ont.

The war on terrorism

We Brits have a history of war in Afghanistan — the Khyber Pass and such — so we know what the costs can be. In 1842, for example, a British regiment, together with their wives, children and other camp followers, left Kabul for India — some 17,000 people. Only one person, a badly wounded doctor, reached India to tell the story of the massacre. However, two little girls also survived. They were discovered by some of the tribesmen who had killed the others.

"For as much as you have done this for the least of these ..."



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Christmas lights

are an annual event in this southern Ontario town. People come from all over to see them. You should have heard the excited voices in the van as I drove toward our destination. I was taking some of the members of our women's group to see the light display and have dinner with the local congregation. The light display was truly magical, and we were treated like royalty at the church. "You know that part in Luke 18 when Jesus wonders out loud if he'll find faith on earth?" one of the women asked me on the drive back. "I know he will," she said, "because of the kindness of those people today."

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They took the girls to their camp and raised them as local children. Some 60 years later, the two women paid a brief visit to India to examine their roots. They quickly returned to Afghanistan and were never heard of again.

That these 17,000 were or were not connected with the military, and that it happened nearly 160 years ago, does not make it any more acceptable than the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City, but it has been forgotten.

David Parker,
West Hill, Ont.

It is not easy for a news media consumer to see any hope for the human race, particularly when one learns (albeit not through the mainstream news media) of combatants from all involved factions committing atrocities in wars. For example, the Afghanistan Northern Alliance, portrayed by the mainstream news media as the good guy, has committed as many atrocities as the Taliban faction.

No matter how "good" the "good guys" are in conflicts, atrocities are committed by all sides. This appears to be true, to some degree, of any war in recorded history — including the most morally "black-and-white" conflict of all, the Second World War. During that global conflict, war crimes (e.g., the superfluous fire-bombing of Dresden, Germany) were indeed committed by the Allied forces. It is not readily known how many such crimes the mainstream media and other concerned entities refused to expose to public discourse and scrutiny.

We in "civilized" society should be careful not to smugly condemn the evil acts of one ethnic/religious/cultural group or another. The victims of atrocities during one period often become the atrocious victimizers of another time.

I tend to give credence to the Bible's claim that humanity is indeed "desperately wicked."

Frank G. Sterle Jr.,
White Rock, B.C.

Reflection

Your editorial in the October *Record* was poignant and helpful in the wake of the attacks on September 11th. This is even more remarkable given the fact that you wrote immediately after the events, when our continent was engulfed in the sheer horror of such terrorism. You also drew attention to Sudan, which has been terrorized since 1989 by the brutal dictator General Omar al Bashir. Al Bashir also backed Osama bin Laden in Sudan between 1991 and 1996 when and where bin Laden made most of his millions and developed his subversive al-Qaeda network further. The Nuer tribespeople in the oil fields area whom the Canadian church delegation met last spring were as terrified by the helicopter gunships and ground attacks that slaughtered so many villagers in unprovoked attacks as the people of Manhattan and Washington this fall. Thank you for a remarkable reflection.

Art Van Seters,
Toronto

Was Paul there?

Glen Sinclair raises a question about Paul (Letters, July/August *Record*) that is crucial for Christian theology. I wrote (April *Record*) that the church is founded on Apostles who "were there" to witness the event named "Jesus the Christ." He is correct that "there is no biblical or historical evidence to suggest Paul and Jesus ever met except for the "spiritual" (as Sinclair calls it) encounter on the Damascus Road (Acts 9). I agree, Paul was not a disciple of the historical Jesus or a witness to the 40 days of Resurrection appearances before the Ascension.

Nevertheless, Paul is an Apostle. That's because he considered the Damascus Road experience to be an authentic meeting with the Risen Christ. He claims this explicitly in the great Resurrection chapter, I Corinthians 15. His argument begins by citing those who were witnesses to the Resurrection, including "more than five hundred brothers and sisters." Then: "Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles … " Paul's claim is that he was born too late for the "normal" sighting of the Risen Lord, so Jesus made a special place for him within the Apostolate by this encounter. It is retroactive. "Am I not an apostle? Have I

not seen Jesus our Lord?" (I Corinthians 9:1, cf. Romans 1:1-6).

Sinclair calls this special encounter "spiritual." Not so. It is of the same *kind* as the earlier appearances (a "theophany"), neither physical nor spiritual, but the new reality of the Risen Lord. Resurrection, of course, is a mystery — indeed, THE Mystery that breaks open the categories of worldly and otherworldly existence, uniting divine and human in a new mode. We can see it is a mystery because Jesus ate with his disciples, but (no doubt!) no longer had digestive processes (see Luke 24:43). And think of that strange verse in Matthew 28:17: "When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted." Doubt even after "seeing" the Risen One? They thought it was an illusion. But Paul knew he had met Jesus whose Ascension did not mean removal from time and space but lordship over the space-time continuum — a kind of fifth dimension.

Joseph C. McLelland,
Montreal

Gift to the Cariboo

In the April 2001 *Record*, People and Places included a photo of piper John Reid from St. Columba Church, Parksville, British Columbia, playing in the little wood-built chapel at Lac La Hache, accompanied by chapel organist Neil Duncan. The condensed caption did not convey the full story of the gift from St. Columba to the Cariboo Presbyterian Church.

The Cariboo Church is primarily a house church, established 12 years ago by generous donations from sources in British Columbia and nation-wide. David and Linda Webber were the first modern missionaries in the vast region of Cariboo-Chilcotin.

The success of the house churches in remote farmhouses required a second ministerial post. Some seven years ago, Shannon Bell-Wyminga and John Wyminga, both graduates of Knox College, Toronto, filled this post. Last year, they and their two daughters moved to a log home in the hamlet of Nazko, adjacent to a large First Nations community. To appreciate the size of the "parish": it takes 3½ hours to drive from the Webbers' home on the northern end of Lac La Hache to the Wymingas' home.

Lac La Hache folks initially came to the Webbers' home for house church; but, as numbers grew, the unused small chapel on a hill was leased from the 100 Mile House United Church. The congregation of St. Columba generously decided to donate funds for the purchase of a keyboard for the chapel and, in September 2000, 15 members travelled by ferry and through mountain passes to take part in a service of dedication for the fine instrument. It has been put to challenging use by David Webber, who chooses at least one new hymn each week from the new hymn-book. Hymns from the Iona Community in Scotland are particularly enjoyed — appropriate choices in appreciation for the generosity of St. Columba!

Neil Duncan,
108 Mile Ranch, B.C.

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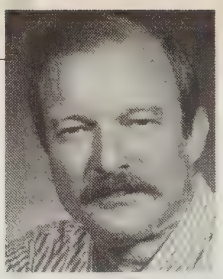
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Joe Reed



Short generations that are long on love

Helping people in a world that is a mixture of computers and ancient traditions

Blood was still dripping from the cow's mouth a month after they brought her to the vet. She's a symbol of what's wrong — and what's right — with international development, and even with PWS&D (Presbyterian World Service and Development).

We stand in a little town, still a village really, 30 kilometres from Chennai, the bustling metropolis you may know as Madras, India. The cow hacks blood. She trembles. But, slowly, she gasps more efficiently. She's thin, agonizingly thin, but she'll live — only because a local vet, paid by a PWS&D partner, stands beside her, irrigating her insides and transfusing her blood. The cow and the family's hope live because Canadian Presbyterians gave money.

But the way of life the cow represents will soon die. Into the pastures, around the villages, up the highways and the back roads, the city spreads. Factories — mostly clothing factories making designer jeans and T-shirts. In Central America, these places spring up in free trade zones where local labour laws don't apply and where workers seek whatever employment they can find. Here, the search is the same; but, the conditions are so poor, there are no local laws.

Chemicals used to dye cloth seep from the factory and spill into the groundwater. That's what the cow drank and that's what burned her guts and her lips and would have killed her.

Later, we pulled into another village and talked with the two oldest women we could find. What could they remember of their grandparents? "Well," the first remarked, "they hunted snakes, scurrying after them into their holes. And we ate rats. We were a jungle people."

"Why don't you tell them the truth?" asked the second. "We still hunt snakes and eat rats. That's what makes us so strong and tough."

And what do they know of their grandchildren's lives? Actually, quite a bit. For the generations are short here. "They are in school. They are studying computers. They spend the afternoon on the Internet." (My own word processing program is but one removed from the most recent. It does not recognize the word "Internet" and tells me to check the spelling.) "And we are glad for them. They live in a different time."

Indeed they do! And they will forever … not unlike our own children. (My father remembered the arrival of the automobile to town, when people couldn't decide whether or not to pronounce the "t" in "Chevrolet." And he lived to see the first human steps on the moon.)

But what does it mean to stand with these courageous people?

Does it mean opposing the local government that wants to restrict the killing of snakes? Snakes eat the rats that, in turn, eat the grain. Should we intervene to explain to the officials, or enable these people to stand up to explain? What is at stake isn't snakes and rats but people's lives.

Does it mean helping people understand why these environmental concerns touch us all? When asked to explain the three-year drought that has dried the land, one old woman said, "We have cut too many trees for firewood."

Does it mean helping people buy cows to provide milk for their children? And helping provide veterinarians to keep the cows alive?

Or training the young to work in the garment industry?

Or helping them get computer skills?

In our age, it means all of these. We wonder at the wisdom — and the love — that frees the old woman to say, "We once lived this way, but our grandchildren must learn computer skills … " Because we love them.

I confess. I feel I have failed. I'm half-way through this year as Moderator and I feel I haven't seized the moment for us all and, somehow, made all this live for you and for our congregations. I feel so blessed to have met these women and to have heard their stories. I picture their grandparents slithering into burrows after snakes. And I picture their grandchildren, professing what may be the central truth of their age, "When all else fails, reboot."

So, what's true? Well, that grandparents still love the young. And tell them the stories.

And, somehow, well, it has something to do with that cow …

Joe Reed

Moderator's itinerary

December 19
Noon Advent service
St. Andrew's (King Street), Toronto

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Record 12/01

R. Sheldon MacKenzie



Too much to do!

The basic matter of making ends meet often turns living into merely existing

One of my former students, a brilliant young woman, went, first, to Windsor, Ontario, and, then, to Toronto for advanced degrees. Her doctoral program was cut short soon after it began due to her responsibilities at home. She is the mother of two bright little boys. (Her husband was never given to much useful work.) As a single, divorced mother, she is and has been the bread-winner in the home. She teaches on a part-time contract at a local college. Desperate for work, she is open to being shamelessly exploited. At the end of the week, she manages to do the domestic chores for which there has been little time during the week. On Sunday mornings, she attends church and teaches a church school class. There is no relaxing weekend for her. She is, quite simply, far too busy.



There are many other families in which both parents work outside the home. Unless they do so, the basic matter of making ends meet is well nigh impossible. They need the income to help meet the bills at the end of each month.

In addition to their work, one or other of the parents usually acts as a taxi driver for their own and other children. (Children are always willing to volunteer their mother or father for taxi service.) There always seems to be hockey practices and games, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, swimming lessons, music lessons, ballet, visits to the doctor or dentist and so on. The weekends are for more errands, shopping for the next week and baking. On Saturday mornings, there may be a brief time of sleeping in and, that, in a semi-conscious state of mind.

In a home with both parents tired and frustrated at work, there are often arguments, either with one's spouse or with the children. And there is little or no time for love. No time for reading, not even the daily paper, and no time for reflection on where they are going. As with my former student, simply getting by is the main goal.

When Sunday morning comes, if either parent attends church (they are fewer and fewer), the singing of "Holy, Holy, Holy" as he or she comes rushing into the church doesn't really do a lot for him/her. Every young parent, single or married, is able to identify with these situations and knows at once what the others are going through. No need for a detailed description.

An older woman, recently retired, was asked whether she was able to visit a relative who was unwell. "I would have visited, and other things too, if Christmas had not come," she answered. If only Christmas had been cancelled, she would have been able to do all the things she wanted to do! And, what is more, things she would have enjoyed doing!

If Christmas had not come, she would have been spared the entertaining of various guests, all the decorating and the extra baking and cooking that go along with the festivities. Not to speak of the hours spent trying to find the right gifts for friends and relatives. When Christmas Eve came, she was so exhausted she could barely remember the words to "O come, all ye faithful." She, too, is busy, much too busy.

This is the case for many people, old and young. Most of us know the feeling. Soon after I retired from Memorial University and went to live in Nova Scotia, a letter came from an old friend, Sister Edward Mary Roche. In her counsel to one in retirement, she wrote: "This is NOT a dress rehearsal. The show has been on for quite some time. Choose life and choose it NOW!"

Good advice. And difficult to practise. R

R. Sheldon MacKenzie, who recently moved to Sardis, B.C., is a retired professor from Memorial University in St. John's and a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

pastoral epistles from peter plymley II



My dear editor:

This may be the first Christmas season when the words "white powder" grab the attention of people other than skiers.

Pollsters have had lots of work lately, taking the emotional temperature of people and reporting back to them on how they feel. It appears people are least stressed in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Having more than a nodding acquaintance with both provinces, I am not surprised. I am positive it is not a question of insensitivity to, or blissful unawareness of, the world's predicament in the face of terrorism. Rather, I think people who have lived through drought, plagues of grasshoppers, the loss of subsidies while all about them are keeping theirs, and penitential winters (without the Jets and with the memory of another less than stellar Roughriders season) are better equipped to withstand stress than most Canadians.

Though the survey didn't break down the statistics province by province, I am equally confident the citizens of Newfoundland have a high stress-resistant quotient. If your lineage has fought for existence over 500 years, trying to coax a cabbage out of a thimbleful of soil left between outcroppings on the glacial rock-face; if now devoid of the fishery in the sea around the rock, equipped only with enough federally financed retraining programs to provide the entire country with beauticians and data-entry clerks — if you can cope, then you can handle stress. (An interesting if unrelated statistic also reveals that, per capita, Newfoundlanders are the most generous Canadians in giving to charitable causes. I'll let you draw your own inferences.)

Quebec had the highest stress levels. Now that's curious. So curious, I phoned my resident unnamed source on matters pertaining to La Belle Province.

"Of all provinces that might be considered hardened to social uncertainty — and even a dollop of terrorism — you would think Quebec would head the short list."

"You might," replied Unnamed Source. "But you forget how thoroughly Quebecers threw off the embrace of Mother Church, exchanging it for the welcoming arms of the secular state and all it aspires to. The bare, ruined choirs and the depopulated sanctuaries may have offered more real comfort in times like this than do sleek apartments and rent-share condominiums of Montreal and Florida. '*Maitres chez nous!*' is less potent a rallying cry when no one seems to be master of his own house anywhere."

The newspapers also pointed to another stress-related phenomenon.

Christian bookstores report sales of Bibles are booming

Christian bookstores report sales of Bibles are booming. I wonder if such sudden interest can be all that calming to the soul seeking solace after years of indifference.

"I'd like a Bible, please."

"Certainly. Would you like the *King James Version*, the *New King James Version*, the *Revised Standard Version*, the *New Revised Standard Version*, the *New International Version*, the *New English Bible*, the *Revised English Bible*, *Today's English Version* or the *Contemporary English Version*, the *American Standard Version*, the *New American Standard Bible*, the *Jerusalem Bible*, the *Living Bible* or … ?

"Stop! Just give me the most popular version!"

"Of course. Would you like it in morocco or calf leather covers, with or without a zipper closure, in hardboard or paperback? We have white (nice for ladies), blue, red, black (traditional) or denim (young people like this one). We have illustrated versions: Doré's engravings, the Great Masters, Salvador Dali, David C. Cook or … "

"Uh … maybe I'll just look around a bit."

"Sure. Perhaps you'd like to browse in our best-seller section. *The Coming Armageddon: How the Christian Can Make a Killing in Real Estate* — we can hardly keep it in stock. Maybe *If I'm Raptured, Don't Say I Didn't Warn You!* or how about *Chicken Soup for the Very, Very Nervous Soul*?, *Prophecy for Dummies*?, *The End of the World as Revealed in Daniel and Revelation — We Got It Right THIS Time! … ?*

You can see, dear editor, such an excursion in search of stress reduction through Holy Writ or semi-related literature (often *very* "semi") might have a counter-productive effect.

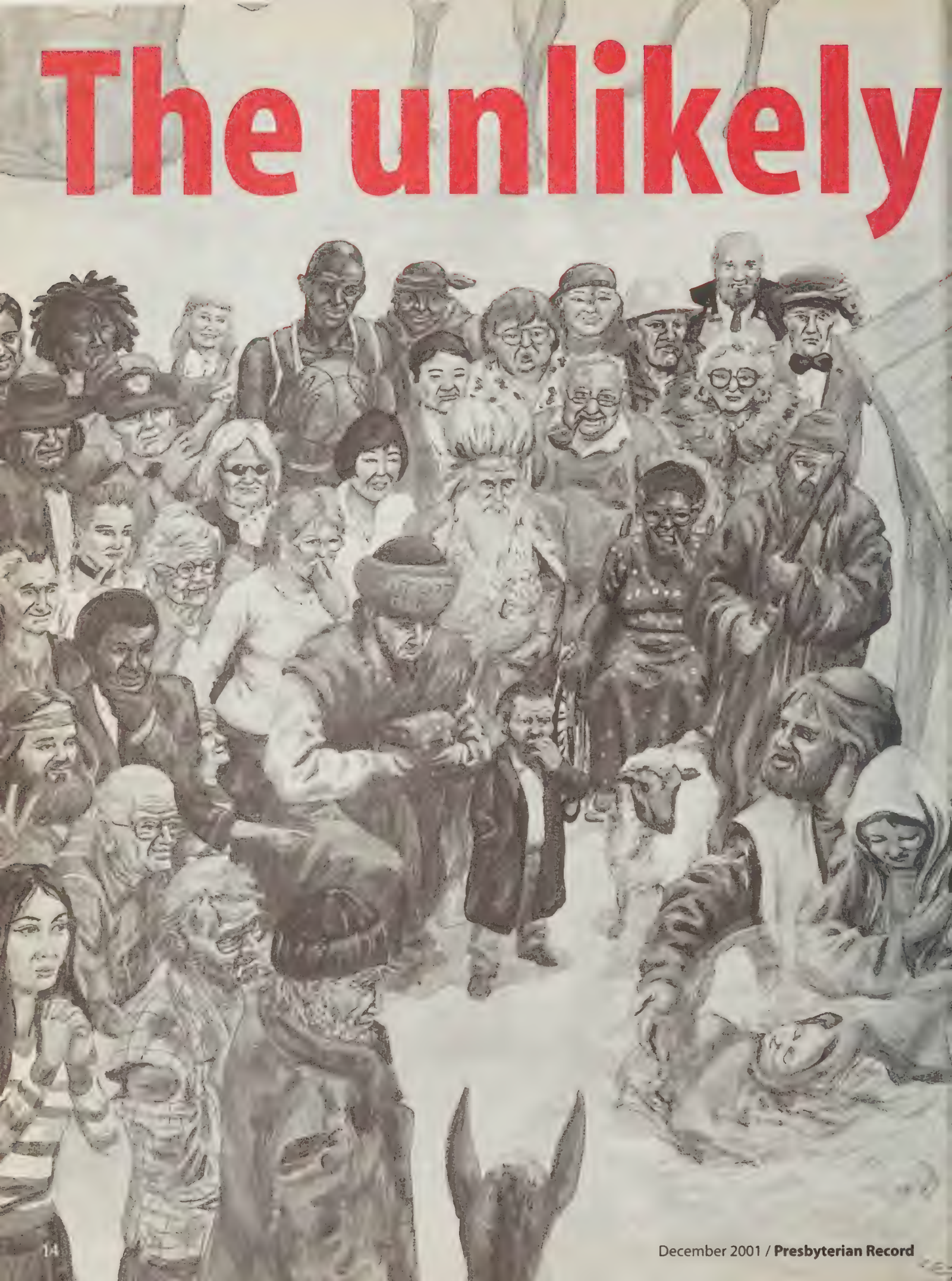
Ah, well, the faithful remnant, who know we have no enduring city on this earth, who know there will be wars and rumours of wars but these things must needs be, who know no one knows the day or the hour when the Kingdom comes … and who know I have omitted the quotation marks in this paragraph, will take comfort. Especially at this time of year — not the first troubled Christmas.

But I'll use quotation marks to close: "For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people … "

Yours, sharing the hopes and fears of all the years,

Peter Plymley II

The unlikely



community

by Eddy Hall

Charismatics and conservatives, wealthy and poor, lovers of hymns and lovers of rock 'n' roll — all have been invited to the party

It really didn't happen that way, you know — the shepherds, the angels, the Wise Men, the sheep and camels and donkeys, all posing around the manger with the star hanging above the stable. To begin with, the Bible says that, once the angels had delivered their message to the shepherds in the field, they returned to heaven. They didn't dart over to the stable. And the Wise Men, despite the perennial pictures on Christmas cards, never showed up at the stable at all. By the time they arrived in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph and Jesus were living in a house (Matthew 2:11). And the star came to rest over the house, not the stable (2:9).

So how did we ever end up with what we know as the traditional nativity scene? I've long assumed it was pure sloppiness. Caught up in the less than accurate traditions that surround Christmas, people simply didn't care how the story really happened. But I've changed my mind. I now believe it is because the manger scene that has become the defining symbol of the Christmas story captures the essence of that story in a way a more historically accurate depiction of the story may not.

Look again at who is gathered around that manger. Mary, probably a teenage mom, chosen by God for her servant heart. Joseph, a skilled craftsman, solidly middle class by the day's standards, but hardly affluent. Shepherds, dirty and smelly, generally considered untrustworthy riff-raff. And Magi from the East — educated, exotic, wealthy — who came to do homage to the new King.

Where else could you find such an unlikely assortment — poor, middle class, wealthy? And what brought them together? Why do we set up our crèches each Christmas with Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the Wise Men arranged in a semicircle? Because of the focal point of that scene: the baby in the manger. People who ordinarily have little to do with one another are brought together, not because of any mutual attraction but because they are each drawn to worship the Christ Child. In his birth, Jesus gave birth to a highly improbable community. It was a pregnant sign of what was to come.

People who ordinarily have little to do with one another are brought together, not because of any mutual attraction but because they are each drawn to worship the Christ Child.

In his birth, Jesus gave birth to a highly improbable community

When Jesus began his public ministry, who followed him? There were the devout ones, of course, who recognized something special in Jesus. Andrew, upon meeting Jesus, announced to his brother, "We have found the Messiah!" When Nathanael met Jesus, he said, "You are the Son of God — the King of Israel!" For such people to identify with Jesus comes as no surprise.

But among Jesus' circle of friends, there were also tax collectors despised both for their collaboration with the hated Roman oppressors and also for their nasty habit of extortion. Zacchaeus was among these, as was Matthew. Jesus attracted prostitutes, lepers, those afflicted with demons — people who had been rejected by mainstream society. Jesus earned — and wore with honour — the badge intended as an insult: "Friend of tax collectors and sinners." And Jesus' travelling company also included women of sufficient wealth who were able to support Jesus and the Twelve financially.

These Twelve, Jesus' closest circle of friends, included not only Matthew, a collaborator with the Romans, but also Simon the Zealot, pledged to the violent overthrow of the Roman occupiers. Rich and poor, respected and despised, radical left and ultra-right — all came together, not because of any attraction they had for each other, but because of Jesus.

The Early Church was made up of this same motley mix — devout Jews ecstatic their long-awaited Messiah had come, along with former thieves, murderers, idolaters and adulterers; Roman soldiers and militant Jewish nationalists; Pharisees and Gentiles; slaves and slaveholders. What could such a wide diversity of humanity possibly have in common that would forge them together into a community of shared life? One thing — they all followed the same Lord.

This unlikely community is not only a historical curiosity but also a living reality. Today, as at Jesus' birth, during Jesus' earthly ministry and in the early days of the church, the invitation to follow Jesus is not only an invitation to a

Illustration by Claudio Ghirardo

relationship with one Person; it is also an invitation to join a unique community. John the Evangelist, in witnessing to the life of Jesus, explains why he writes: "It is this which we have seen and heard that we declare to you also, in order that you may share with us in a common life, that

The Christ who calls us into relationship with himself does not give us the option of loving him without also loving one another

life which we share with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3, *REV*). The evangelistic invitation is not simply an invitation to know Jesus, as we in our individualistic culture have often implied; it is also an invitation to share a common life with Jesus, with the Father, and with all the brothers and sisters that come with the family.

As much as we might sometimes wish otherwise, we cannot enter into community with Jesus without also entering into community with his other followers. We cannot join the family of God without acquiring a host of siblings. These people, many of whom we have no earthly reason to befriend, become our sisters and brothers because of Jesus.

Dancing charismatics and liturgical Lutherans, conservatives and liberals, wealthy and poor, educated and uneducated, lovers of hymns and lovers of rock 'n' roll and lovers of country music. People with brokenness of all kinds — sexual, physical, emotional, spiritual. We have all been invited to the party. We have all been adopted into the family.

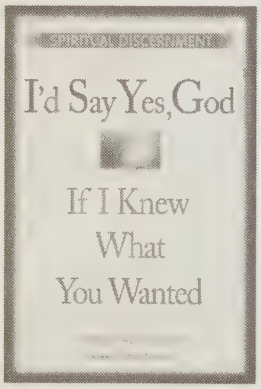
As members of this family, we are called not only to worship the same Lord but also to love one another. To honor one another, to share with one another, to serve one another, to forgive one another, to carry each other's burdens. The Christ who calls us into relationship with himself does not give us the option of loving him without also loving one another.

This, I suspect, even if we haven't thought about it, is why we find the historically inaccurate nativity scene so compelling. Not only does it draw together the various strands of the Christmas narrative, it also draws together varied humanity. Perhaps, in looking on that manger scene, we can imagine ourselves kneeling at the manger, surrounded by such a diverse assortment of worshippers that there would be no conceivable reason for our ever coming together except for the baby in the manger.

This Christmas, as we study the stable and its visitors, may it remind us to celebrate not only the baby in the manger but also the gift of being embraced by — and the call to embrace — this most unlikely community. R

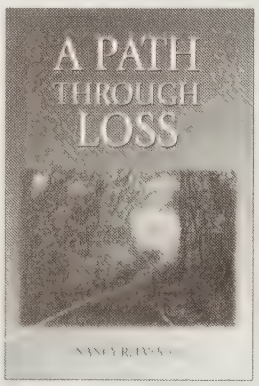
Eddy Hall of Goessel, Kansas, is a church consultant who works with local congregations to enhance ministry through training events and strategic planning of ministries, staffing, facilities and finances.

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The inn

The barn, the breath of animals,
the place where those who cannot
build themselves grand lives
gather for shelter, these
were starlit by heaven
and they shine in perfect miniature
and full colour against our dark thoughts.
There is this place we can retreat to,
draw ourselves away from daily clatter,
breathe in the aroma of plain bread baking,
a loaf and a remembrance in our pack
to help us as we try to travel back
through all the labyrinths we have built,
back to the place where we began.
There are no candles lit there,
yet the windows glow
with promise of welcome.

— Carol Hamilton

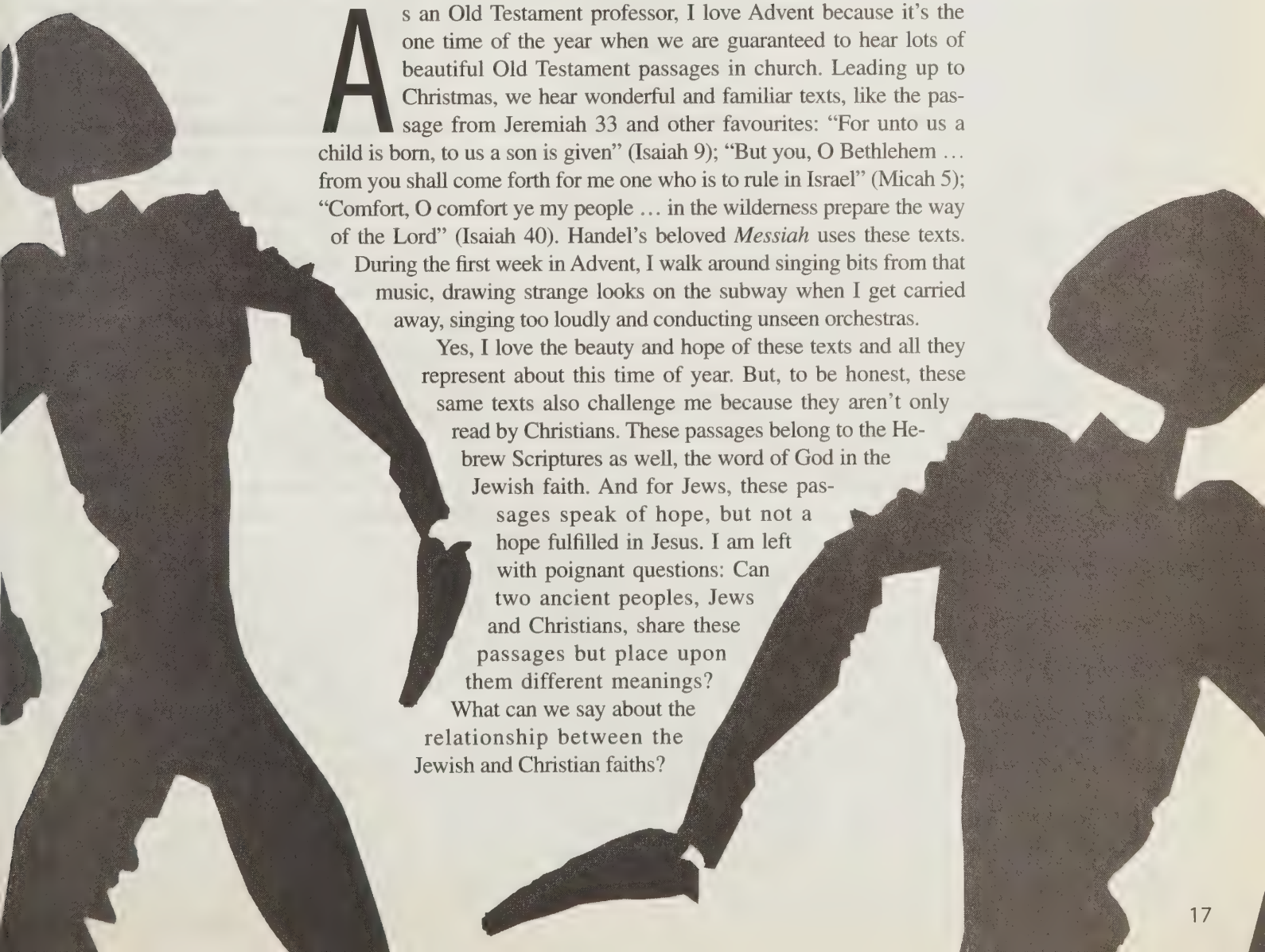
Waiting for the Messiah

by Patricia Dutcher-Walls

Jews and Christians, despite placing different meanings on the same passages, remain united in hope for a time when God will overcome all that hurts and destroys

> The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.
>
> *Jeremiah 33:14-15*

> Then they will see the "Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.... So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.
>
> *Luke 21:27-28, 31*



As an Old Testament professor, I love Advent because it's the one time of the year when we are guaranteed to hear lots of beautiful Old Testament passages in church. Leading up to Christmas, we hear wonderful and familiar texts, like the passage from Jeremiah 33 and other favourites: "For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given" (Isaiah 9); "But you, O Bethlehem ... from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel" (Micah 5); "Comfort, O comfort ye my people ... in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord" (Isaiah 40). Handel's beloved *Messiah* uses these texts. During the first week in Advent, I walk around singing bits from that music, drawing strange looks on the subway when I get carried away, singing too loudly and conducting unseen orchestras.

Yes, I love the beauty and hope of these texts and all they represent about this time of year. But, to be honest, these same texts also challenge me because they aren't only read by Christians. These passages belong to the Hebrew Scriptures as well, the word of God in the Jewish faith. And for Jews, these passages speak of hope, but not a hope fulfilled in Jesus. I am left with poignant questions: Can two ancient peoples, Jews and Christians, share these passages but place upon them different meanings? What can we say about the relationship between the Jewish and Christian faiths?

During the history of ancient Israel, these passages all came to be associated with a major theme in Old Testament theology: the expectation that the Lord would restore Israel, often expressed with hopes of universal peace and justice and a restored cosmic order. Crucial to these hopes was a messiah — one who would be an anointed king of David's dynasty, establishing the definitive Reign of the Lord. This was an expectation of a final resolution to suffering and sin under the rule of a righteous king. These hopes became a primary expectation of the Jewish people in the years after the exile — the centuries of Persian, Greek and Roman domination of Judah.

However we may variously understand the texts of Scripture, whether we confess that the Messiah has come or that the Messiah is yet to come, we are united in our hope

As heirs and descendants of Jewish tradition, early Christians also looked to these messianic passages. Absolutely central to the witness of the New Testament and the confession of the Christian church is that Jesus is the Christ, the "anointed one" or the "Messiah." In a variety of ways, the writers of the Gospels and the other New Testament books expressed their conviction that Jesus was the fulfilment of all of the hopes for a messiah sent by God to redeem and restore God's people.

But many of the Jews of Jesus' day and in the time of the Early Church did not accept Jesus as the fulfilment of the messianic hope. For them, Jesus was, perhaps, a rabbi or teacher, but no more. The Jewish people of that time continued to look for the fulfilment of their hopes of a restoration and a messiah, an expectation that continues to this day.

The fact that early Christians understood Jesus as the Messiah and Jewish people did not is at the heart of the tragic history of relations between Christians and Jews. From almost the earliest strands of New Testament writings, the relationship between the Christian and Jewish communities was often contentious. Many New Testament writings were intended as a defence of the Christian confession over against Judaism. Later, as Christianity gained power and prestige, and dogmatic positions were fought over within the church, the Jews were seen as opponents to be belittled and vilified.

These battles bequeathed to the church attitudes toward Judaism that blamed the Jews for their rejection of Christ and claimed that the church had replaced them in God's plan of salvation. It reached the point in later centuries that some Gothic cathedrals in Europe had carved sculptures outside their doors of two women, one representing the church as the beloved bride of Christ and the other representing the rejected synagogue, shattered and cast down. Christians today have inherited these attitudes, often without thought or examination or concern. We have inherited the legacy of anti-Semitism these attitudes allowed and encouraged, and have been left with confusion about our relationship with the Jewish people.

As we celebrate this Advent season of waiting for the Messiah, it is an opportune time to consider these attitudes and this legacy. I bring three biblical reflections, all questions that offer, I hope, a way out of arrogance and hostility and a way forward into community and sharing with those who are, in reality, our brothers and sisters before God.

A first question Has the "old covenant" of God with the Jewish people been nullified and replaced by the "new covenant" of God with the church? Has God rejected one people, the Jews, in favour of a new people, the followers of Christ?

Paul wrestles with this in chapters 9 to 11 of Romans. A Jew who became a Christian, Paul grieves over the apparent refusal of his own people to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. But Paul does not give up on the ultimate salvation of the Jews. He is convinced God has not rejected his people. They are still God's elect and beloved. Theirs is "the glory, and the promises and the covenants" (9:4), "for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (11:29). In what he can only call "a mystery," the Jews have not heard the word of Good News.

The best explanation Paul can come up with for this perplexing situation is that the Jews have so far rejected the gospel so there might be time to bring the Gentile church to salvation. After that, as he states in exactly these words, "all Israel will be saved" (11:26). In other words, Paul's Gentile readers must not become arrogant over Israel's refusal, because this is for the Gentiles' sake. The Jews will receive mercy and salvation in God's time. If any of us today persist in the idea that the synagogue and old covenant and the Jewish people have been rejected, we are not hearing Paul.

A second question What then do we say about the Old Testament messianic passages like the familiar Advent readings? Can these passages both be fulfilled by Jesus for the Christian faith and remain unfulfilled for the Jewish faith?

In essence, this question asks if we as Christians can live with a view that Scripture contains truth, yet that truth is engaged with its context and its hearers. For Jewish faith, the Messiah is still coming; for Christian faith, the Messiah has come. The messianic Scriptures address both confessions in equal measure and with equal validity.

For me as a Christian, Jesus is the fulfilment of all the hopes of God's people for the Messiah; he is, indeed, the Christ, Lord and Saviour. I believe that to be truth. But I will not make an absolute claim that this is the only way to understand the meaning of these texts or to express God's saving grace in the world because, ultimately, I do not know; I cannot claim certainty. I know of another

For further reading

Ellis, Marc. *Ending Auschwitz: The Future of Jewish and Christian Life* (John Knox/ Westminster, 1994).

Gager, John. *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford, 1983).

Kee, Howard Clark & Borowsky, Irvin, eds. *Removing Anti-Judaism from the New Testament* (American Interfaith Institute, 1998).

Pawlikowski, John T. *What Are They Saying about Christian-Jewish Relations?* (Paulist Press, 1980).

Reading list compiled by J. Dorcas Gordon, principal, Knox College, Toronto.

confession that is equally based in God's Word and that is the faith of the Jews who still await the Messiah. So I must be content to live with ambiguity, not about my own faith, but about my understanding of the ways of God. I confess what I believe, but I would be arrogant to claim that my version of the meaning of any text is absolute. That would be a claim that my knowledge is like God's, and everything I know of God's Word says that is sin.

A third question If the Messiah has come in Jesus, why have we not experienced the fullness of the Reign of God that was always part of the expectation of a messiah? Why are we still here in history, and not in some fulfilled new heaven and new earth?

One of the things the Early Church believed and expressed about Jesus was that he initiated the Reign of God or, in gospel language, he announced the coming of the Kingdom of God. Passages throughout the New Testament describe how this reign would be fulfilled in its full, physical reality at a future time, when God would judge the entire world and make all things new. Luke 21 records Jesus talking about the coming of the "Son of Man." He asserts the nearness and unpredictability of the Kingdom, and he exhorts the disciples to be alert so they will be ready for the redemption that is to come.

The Early Church had to make sense of the fact that the expected reign of justice and peace that had been part of the messianic expectation was not yet completed in Jesus' own time. Christians had to explore what their messianic expectations meant. They remembered Jesus' words about his coming again and about the fullness of redemption and salvation for the world. They came to see that no one could know or predict with absolute certainty when the Kingdom would come. Waiting and watching were called for because God would, in God's own time, fulfil all the promises of a new heaven and a new earth.

Do you hear what Christians are saying here? We await the fulfilment of the expectation that the Lord will restore creation. We await with hope a time of universal peace and justice and a restored cosmic order. We await the return of the Messiah — one who has been anointed as a king of David's line to establish in the world the definitive Reign of the Lord. These hopes have come to be our central expectation for the Reign of Christ.

But this means we are awaiting in hope the same fulfilment as the Jews — that all of creation will be restored. Jews and Christians await salvation, an expectation of a final resolution to suffering and sin under the rule of the righteous One. However we may variously understand the texts of Scripture, whether we confess that the Messiah has come or that the Messiah is yet to come, we are united in our hope. Christians and Jews are united in faith that God can and will overcome all that hurts and destroys and, finally, there will be no more tears or sighing or sorrow.

I end these thoughts with a plea and a modest proposal. I plead for the church to overcome its centuries of anti-Semitism. Let all Christians examine themselves and our beliefs and rethink our relationship with the Jewish people. Somehow, we all need to attend to our relationship with God's first people. There is a new willingness throughout the church to engage in dialogue with the Jewish community. We must all be about that in whatever way we can.

And a modest proposal for Advent. Imagine you are Jewish for a few weeks. *Wait* for the Messiah. Recreate what it was like for the people of God before Jesus came, what it is like for the Jewish people now, to hear these Old Testament texts. Don't jump to Christmas — don't jump to an easy and automatic "that text is about Jesus." *Feel* the longing and the waiting and the hope of an expectation yet to be fulfilled. Let the texts be what they were for 600 years — only and fully a hope, only and fully a cry in the darkness for the One who would fulfil all our deepest needs and dreams and longings. This will create for us an understanding of the expectations of the Jewish people still and, indeed, of the hopes of all of God's people, Jewish and Christian, for the restoration we still await. Wait for the Messiah, and Christmas will indeed be the fulfilment of that waiting. R

Patricia Dutcher-Walls is professor of Hebrew Scripture and the Old Testament, Knox College, Toronto.

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For almost 20 years, I have been conducting conferences and retreats for congregations of most sincerely committed to helping equip its people for ministry in daily life that was not a vital, active

The risk of empowering the laity

by Deidre Palmer

Empowering the whole church for participation in the ministry and mission of Christ in the world

Empowering is a risky process — it can transform individuals and communities, even whole societies. Empowered people will not sit silently in the face of injustice. They will want to be involved in their neighbourhoods and world. They may seek to reform the church and question the present way of life.

As a Christian educator, I am aware of the "dangers" of empowering people when we encourage them to encounter the biblical story and invite them to listen to God's call on their lives. As they reflect theologically on God's action in the world today, they open themselves to the release of insights, energy and gifts that may turn their lives upside-down. However, empowering people is a risk worth taking, because empowered communities often become sources of life, love and hope for our society and for the world.

The Christian church believes empowering people for ministry and mission is a work of the Holy Spirit. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Throughout the New Testament, this empowerment of the Holy Spirit bestowed a sense of dignity and worth upon people, as proclaimers of good news and active agents of God in the world.

When we speak of "empowering the laity in ministry," we mean participating in an activity of the Holy Spirit. This also involves networks of relationships, ministries of the church and long-term planning and commitment.

I will focus on foundations and processes I have seen contributing to the empowerment of the laity (*laos* — the whole people of God) for their participation in Christ's ministry and mission in the world. Questions throughout the article will encourage you to reflect on your insights from your experience of ministry.

Models of the church

The notion of empowering the laity for ministry and mission is based on biblical and theological understandings of the nature of the church and its mission. Models of church that empower the laity are: the Body of Christ, the priesthood of all believers, a covenant community and a church where every member is a minister. The model of the church as a "discipleship of equals" is a Christian community that, through its commitment to Jesus Christ, regards the members as having equal status with one another. All members share the responsibility for ministry and mission in the world. Leadership is shared and rotated among members. Authority takes the form of loving service, modelled by Jesus. But equality does not mean we all have the same role — there are various roles and gifts.

Empowering the whole church for ministry and mission is a shared journey. It is not something clergy or other lay leaders do for laypeople, but an empowering of one another in striving toward faithful Christian discipleship and service.

> What understanding of the church undergirds the ministry and mission of the Christian community of which you are a part? In what ways does this understanding contribute to the "empowerment of the laity for ministry"?

Mission

Our mission in the world is to embody the good news of Jesus Christ and to live as signs of God's coming reign of justice, liberation and wholeness for all people. Faith and life are not divided. God is active in the history of all humanity.

Much of our discussion on the church's mission in the world seems to have a movement of "us" going out to "them." Yet, many members of Christian communities are already "out" there — laypeople working in health care, educa-

f the major American Christian denominations. I have never found a congregation that was urposeful, and growing community of faith. Not a single one. Not in 20 years.

— William E. Diehl in *The Monday Connection*

tion, business, retail, industry, factories. Laypeople are well-established in their communities through service organizations, political parties, environmental groups and their children's schools. If we plan mission with a major emphasis on the laypeople, we must take more seriously the social networks in society of which they are already a part.

In what ways do you/your Christian community encourage laypeople to engage in Christ's mission through their daily lives?

A passionate relationship with God

Building on these foundations, we need to focus our energies in several areas to empower people for participation in the ministry and mission of Christ.

A passionate relationship with God sustains and motivates all our endeavours. It arises from the depths of our being. When God touches the depths of our being, we respond in worship, devotion and action.

If the whole church is to participate in ministry and mission, we need to attend to our journey with God. This includes daily prayer and meditation on the Scriptures. It involves sharing regularly with a worshipping community and actively participating in Christ's mission in the world.

Shaping and nurturing Christian community

"Empowering laity" does not simply focus on individual Christians and their growth, but on the health of the whole Christian community. Several factors emerge regularly as significant in the growth of "empowered" disciples of Jesus Christ:

- a family setting in which loving parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles faithfully pass on the Christian story and vision
- a local congregation having long-term strategies, programs and mentoring processes for developing youth and young adult leadership through Bible study, Christian education, pastoral care, and engagement in ministry and mission
- a Christian community and small groups that encourage questions and give opportunity to explore the implications of Christian faith for daily life and relationships
- opportunities for ministry that encourage the gifts of all ages to grow and flourish
- intergenerational relationships that serve to mentor younger members and encourage older members to share their faith stories.



Empowering people is a risk worth taking, because empowered communities often become sources of life, love and hope for our society and for the world

Empowering people for ministry and mission involves the development of congregations committed to:

- encouraging participation in ministry and decision-making
- developing leadership
- offering lifelong Christian education for adults, youth and children
- participation in the community and society.

We need Christian communities open to enquiry and reform, capable of nurturing people in the Christian faith and engaging them in Christ's mission.

> In what ways is your Christian community contributing to the empowering of people for Christian ministry and mission? What changes/new developments in your community's life might contribute to such empowerment?

Developing and encouraging leaders

In the Uniting Church in Australia to which I belong, leaders come in various shapes and forms. Some are ordained ministers and deacons; others are lay preachers, small group leaders, Christian educators, youth workers, members of lay ministry teams, music group leaders, etc. If we are to empower laypeople for ministry and mission, we need various leaders to be bearers of God's vision. The ultimate vision we uphold is the vision of the Reign of God. We see this embodied most fully in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Leaders need to remind the faith community we are called to be signs of God's Reign in the world. Such leaders would be living out the gospel of Jesus Christ in their own lives.

Equipping and *empowering* the laity are closely related. As people feel more adequately equipped as Christians, they are more likely to feel empowered to claim their role as ministers in Christ's church, as disciples who witness in their daily life to the redemptive activity of God in the world. Lifelong Christian education needs to include biblical studies and theological reflection using educational processes that are empowering.

Encountering the Bible

The texts of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament are essential for discovering who God is and the nature of God's relationship with God's people and with the world. Biblical literacy is essential to informed Christian discipleship.

More than simply reading their Bibles, people need to hear God speak to them through the Bible in ways that connect with their lives and with the world today. Laypeople who know the Bible well need to be freed to become partners in ministry and mission with ordained ministers.

Theological reflection

All members of Christian communities reflect on who God is and the nature of God's relationship with humanity. While such theological reflection is an integral part of the lives of many Christians, some laypeople continue to view theology as something only ministers and seminaries do. When theological reflection is at the centre of our planning, laypeople grow in confidence and the church's ministry and mission are strengthened. Encourage laypeople to tell their stories about God's interaction with them and with their world. Assist them to read and hear insights from theologians. They will be excited by theologies that understand holiness and justice to be an integral part of the one gospel, that call for personal and social conversion, and that recognize the equality of men and women before God. They will develop and articulate theologies that promote a gospel that touches every aspect of their lives, including economic and political realities.

Resources

Craig Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith, Education and Christian Practices* (Geneva, 1999)

Disciple — Bible Study series — Cokesbury (United Methodist publication, U.S.A.)

Pastoral Partners — a program designed to develop the gifts of laypeople in pastoral care (MediaCom Associates, Australia)

Empowering educational processes

Education can be used to keep people in their place and legitimate the *status quo*. Hence, simply advocating and engaging in lifelong Christian education may or may not empower the laity for ministry and mission. We need educational processes that:

- invite people to give voice to their experiences
- encourage people to reflect critically upon their lives and the life of their faith community
- encourage people to see the ongoing revelation of God in their lives, their

Pontius' Puddle



communities and the world around them
- provide substantial content that informs people biblically, theologically, pastorally
- make significant connections between the biblical story and vision and our lives today
- encourage ongoing transformation in people's lives and in the systems and communities in which they live
- invite enquiry and encourage people to ask questions
- encourage people to think imaginatively of creative alternatives for our life as a church, as a society and as a global community.

What educational processes and programs are currently operating in your congregation? What are your hopes for the Christian education processes and programs in your congregation?

Identifying gifts of the community: equipping and supporting people who offer their gifts

The empowerment of the laity is more likely to take place when communities and leaders are actively identifying the gifts and potential of every participant in their community, then equipping them through education in particular areas of ministry (for example, pastoral care, advocacy for justice, teaching, leading worship). These communities also support those who offer their gifts through affirmation, care and ongoing education.

Astute, informed action

Empowered Christians moved by the Spirit of God to act for justice, love and compassion in our world need to be politically astute and act in ways that reflect an understanding of the context in which they live and work. Participating in Christ's mission in the world involves Christian communities in the complexities of the economics, politics, prejudices and pitfalls of our world. If we are to engage in an effective mission, action needs to be informed. We need to be informed about our Christian mission and about the Christ who sends us out. We also need to be informed about our world, its sociology, politics, economics, complex web of human relationships and the natural environment we are to care for and which, in turn, supports our life. We will need systemic analysis, not only personal examination of individual lives.

This informed activity requires a community of people who share their gifts and insights. No one of us can begin to understand everything about our world but, together, we can inform each other. We can harness the gifts of Christians who are economists, politicians, child care workers, health care professionals, lawyers, factory workers, sociologists, parents — all bring different insights to inform us about the world and its ever-present needs. It is important that our action be informed and well-planned if we are to be effective in bringing about change. As people participate in such action, they become further encouraged and empowered to continue to participate in Christ's mission in the world.

In what ways are you developing/might you develop networks of people and resources to inform your Christian community's mission in your neighbourhood and society?

God invites our partnership in the Reign of God in bringing the renewal and restoration of creation. God issues the invitation to all of us — laity, clergy, young, old, those within and those outside the church. A positive response to this invitation leads to shared responsibility for ministry and mission and to a Christian discipleship that touches every aspect of our lives. A positive response to God's invitation leads to our empowerment as individuals and as Christian communities, so that we might be witnesses to God's all-embracing love and grace as well as being sources of love, life and hope in our world.

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you ... " R

Deidre Palmer is lecturer in lay ministry studies and Christian education, at Parkin-Wesley College and the Adelaide College of Divinity, and a senior lecturer for Flinders University, School of Theology, Australia. She is a member of Rosefield Uniting Church in Adelaide, South Australia. Contact: deidre.palmer@flinders.edu.au or Adelaide College of Divinity, 34 Lipsett Terrace, Brooklyn Park, South Australia 5032.

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Getting the Message

by Clint Kelly

Eugene Peterson's contemporary translation of the Bible has enjoyed immediate acclaim

Eugene Peterson grew up in his father's butcher shop in Kalispell, Montana. Young Peterson ran errands, polished the meat display cases, ground hamburger and was allowed to cut liver "because you couldn't wreck liver." He learned and matured, the vivid aroma of animal blood and sawdust shavings filling his nostrils with a lifetime of memories.

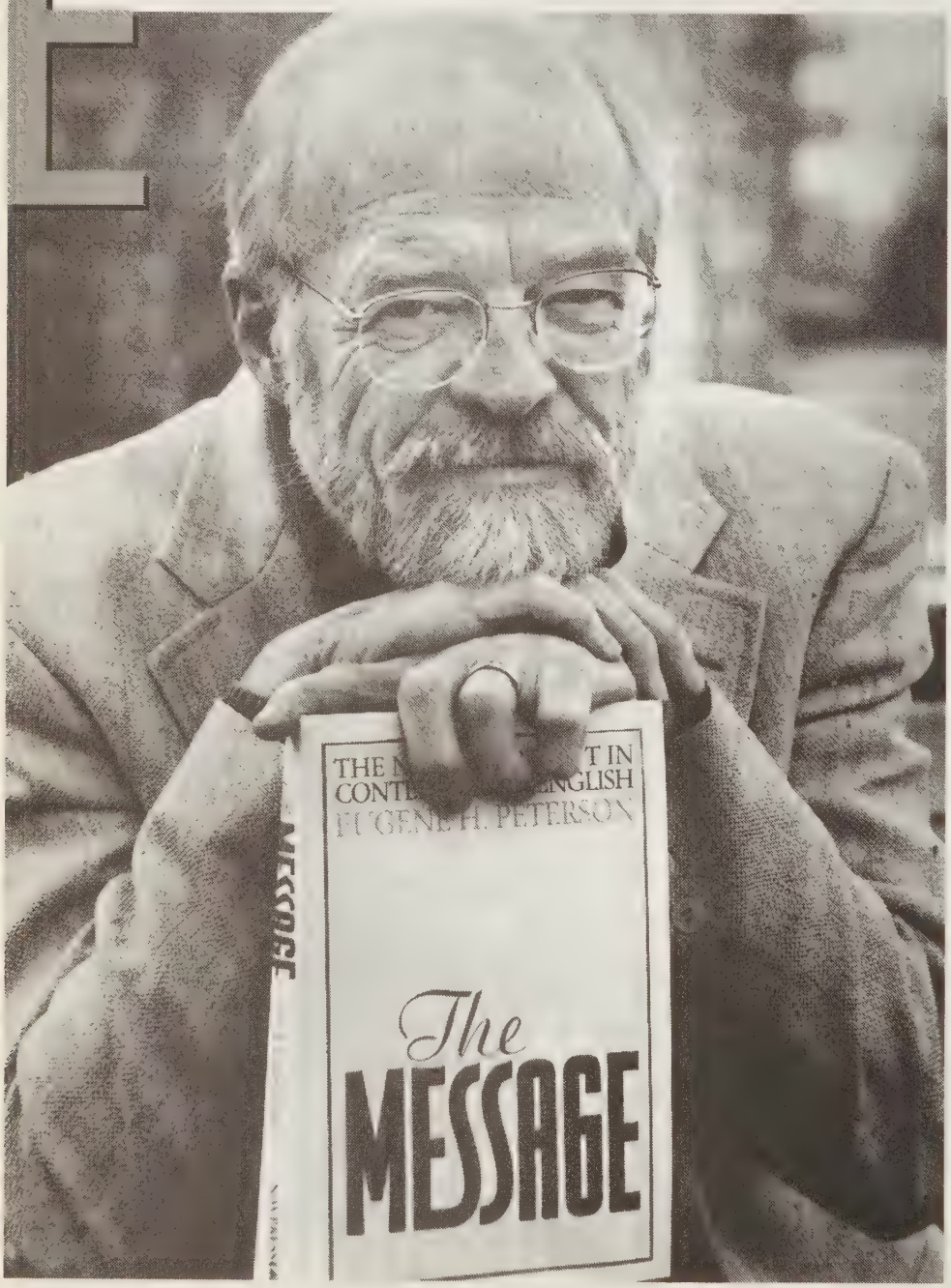


Photo by Jerry Gay

More important, the butcher boy of Kalispell *listened*. Listened to the earthy, gritty talk of ranchers, woodsmen, farmers and townsfolk. Revelled in the rich cadences and rhythmic speech patterns. A generation later, that ordinary, plain talk came back to him as he struggled to do what only one other pastor since the 19th century has ever attempted: a new translation of the Holy Bible.

Eugene Peterson's *The Message* enjoyed immediate acclaim and has sold more than three million copies of the core editions, including Psalms and Proverbs, and another three million ancillary products.

"When Paul of Tarsus wrote a letter, the people who received it understood it instantly," says Peterson explaining his translation's wide acceptance. "When the prophet Isaiah preached a sermon, I can't imagine the people went to the library to do a word study to figure it out. That was the basic premise under which I worked. I began with the New Testament in the Greek. A rough and jagged language, not so grammatically clean. I just typed out a page the way I thought it would have sounded to the Galatians."

Peterson's contemporary translation was judged a vigorous scriptural interpretation for the ordinary person. Renowned biblical scholars who monitored Peterson's work found the same thing. *The Message* was not only doctrinally sound but also delightfully refreshing.

In Jesus' parable of the wedding banquet, for example, the "oxen and fattened cattle" on the menu in older translations became "prime rib" in *The Message*.

Legalistic Pharisees once rebuked as a "brood of vipers" are now roundly castigated as "reptilian sneaks." Paul the Apostle has become that "jailbird preacher."

"Many people had never read the Bible before, or quit reading it years ago," says Peterson, the former Boston Marathon runner who picks passable banjo. "*The Message* drew them in."

When NavPress came to Peterson in 1990 with the idea for the project, he and his wife, Jan, took six months of prayer and discussion before saying yes. They had always ministered side by side, and he felt it was as much her decision as his own. Certainly he was no stranger to publishing. The former Presbyterian pastor is the author of more than 20 books.

None the less, he was reluctant to begin the project. "Who was I to produce another version of the Bible? I didn't think I could do it. My first few chapters of Matthew plodded along ... But when I hit the Sermon on the Mount in Chapter 5, it kicked in and I let loose. I got excited. I *could* do this!"

But what would people think? Translating Scripture can be risky business as others have discovered. "When Pastor J. B. Phillips finished his translation," says Peterson, "he was blasted terribly from all sides." Worse, when Kenneth Taylor finished his paraphrase, *The Living Bible*, he actually received death threats from people opposed to tampering with sacred writ. Knowing how testy some folks can get over a "new" rendering, Peterson braced himself against a firestorm of criticism in 1993 when the New Testament *Message* was first published. "I was ready to hide out in Samoa."

He needn't have worried. Inflamed critics, if there were any, remained noticeably silent. Peterson views the lack of major criticism of his translation as a credit to earlier translators. "Maybe they took the flak, and now I don't have to." In fact, Peterson experienced a personal sense of satisfaction. "This feels like a harvesting. I have a strong sense of wholeness, a sense of things not left undone."

One of his great memories is the day the editor at NavPress called and said they needed to give the new translation a title. The living room rang with excited chatter for the next two hours as the Petersons and all three of their adult children tossed ideas back and forth. They settled on *The Message*, a translation of the word "gospel." In true Peterson family style, no one can recall who came up with the idea.

"He's an ordinary guy who doesn't take himself too seriously," says Eugene's friend and college classmate Russ Reid. "That's a rare trait among people of his intellect and achievement." And it's the saving grace for a writer/translator looking to make the Bible more accessible to more people. "My wife and I had to laugh at the way he had the mourners in Matthew 9 bring casseroles when the ruler's daughter died. He's one of a kind!"

A private person, Peterson doesn't much care for the glare of public attention. "Jan and I have felt vulnerable. We've said no to most invitations. Our ministry is to teach, to write, to be with students and not to get distracted." Those distractions include as many as 300 speaking requests each year.

But Eugene Peterson would rather climb a mountain or teach a class than speak to a large audience. He holds a master's degree in Semitic languages from Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and is professor emeritus of spiritual theology and a spring lecturer at Regent College, Vancouver, where it is said his bear stories are second to none. Today, however, his knees are bad, and he and Jan must settle for long walks in the woods.

Besides, he must finish translating the Bible, that monumental assignment received from God 11 years ago. He does it by what one reviewer called "ingenious [writing] in a homespun sort of way" that breathes new life into the old, old story. He proves, once again, that what has been done many ways before has never been done *this* way.

The beauty of the Scriptures is that there's always room for one more telling, as there was in that butcher shop long ago when young Eugene cut liver and listened to grown men talk. R

Clint Kelly is a communication specialist in Everett, Washington. This article was published first in *Mature Living* and is reprinted with permission.

When you're between a rock and a hard place

But now, GOD's Message,
the God who made you in the first place, Jacob,
the One who got you started, Israel:
"Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you.
I've called your name. You're mine.
When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you.
When you're in rough waters, you will not go down.
When you're between a rock and a hard place,
it won't be a dead end ...

"Forget about what's happened:
don't keep going over old history.
Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new.
It's bursting out! Don't you see it?
There it is! I'm making a road through the desert,
rivers in the badlands.
Wild animals will say 'Thank you!'
— the coyotes and the buzzards —
Because I provided water in the desert,
rivers through the sun-baked earth,
Drinking water for the people I chose,
the people I made especially for myself,
a people custom-made to praise me."

— *Isaiah 43:1-2, 18-21, The Message*

Charlie



by Don Davis

Lessons in love delivered from a wheelchair

In 1967, when I was 17 years old, I first met Charlie. He was a patient in a rehabilitation unit where I worked. Charlie, six feet four inches, a husband and father of two little girls, had fallen asleep at the wheel of his semi-trailer while working double shifts. He ended up a quadriplegic.

Charlie looked at life differently. Even though he couldn't walk, he helped me take many small spiritual steps that drew me closer to God.

Little Charlie was eight inches long. His coat was lime-green, and a jagged mane of red material separated his eyes. He looked like a plump green and red exclamation mark. He held a red, plastic, pennant-shaped sign in his right hand that read "100% Lovable!" I knew Charlie would get a kick out him.

I sat outside Charlie's small bungalow, revving the engine of my 1961 Volkswagen Beetle. Warm air nibbled at the frost covering most of my front window on this bitterly cold night. A long wheelchair ramp ran up to the front door of the house, testimony that this family was caring for a special person. I switched off the motor and made my way to the front door.

Ruth, Charlie's wife, greeted me with a warm hug. I followed her into the living room where Charlie's face glowed with the joy of living. I gave him a hug and sat down to talk about the week's events. Charlie would have none of that.

"Where is that surprise you told me about?" he asked.

When I held out Little Charlie, Charlie's face broke into a big smile. He read the words on Little Charlie's red pennant. "I wish all of us felt we were 100 per cent lovable," he said.

I was about to reply affirmatively when Charlie continued. Little Charlie had triggered a critical and painful memory.

"I felt anything but lovable on my first day home from the hospital. It was one of the lowest days of my life. The complexities of my new reality

struck me. The hospital support systems were suddenly gone. Although my wife and children were thrilled to have me home, I could tell I had become an incredible burden. At that moment, I felt worthless — anything but lovable."

Tears began running down his face as he continued to talk. "I felt totally useless in every respect. I couldn't even contribute to running the house. I loved Ruth so much and felt she deserved someone better — someone who could help with the house, someone who could bring in a salary, someone who could help raise the children. The evening planned as a home-coming celebration felt like one of my greatest defeats. I could not believe anyone could love me. I remember withdrawing into myself, into a small suffocating world of my own.

"My brother came later in the evening to help put me to bed. Ruth came over to kiss me goodnight. As she stroked my forehead, she told me how glad she was to have me back home. I told her how I was feeling. I said she should consider putting me into a chronic care facility. I was nothing but a burden.

"I'll never forget what she said. She told me her love was not determined by what I could do. She married and loved the person inside me. I objected, telling her she didn't understand. Regardless of what came up, she said, we would find a solution to the problem. The important thing was for us to be together as a family. That was the first time in my life I felt 100 per cent lovable.

"Throughout my life, I feared anyone who really knew me would not accept me. I did things for people, hoping to gain their acceptance. The accident forced me to review my relationships. I had to ascertain which relationships contained real love and which contained bought love. That single defining moment turned out to be a critical turning point for me." As he spoke these words, Charlie's tear-glazed face broke into a loving, reminiscent smile.

"Wow, when I brought Little Charlie here, I never expected this type of response," I said. "I hope everything is OK."

Charlie smiled and asked me to wipe the tears from his face. "Little Charlie will remind us that, no matter what, we are all 100 per cent lovable."

"Do you mean like a mother's love or something like that?" I asked.

"I am blessed to have a wonderful wife who provides unconditional love," he replied. "But many people don't feel 100 per cent lovable. That's why it is wonderful God finds us 100 per cent lovable. We only have to bring our sins to him and ask him to help us and forgive us. When I commune with God in prayer each day, I can feel his love. It's a love that permeates my entire being. The great thing is we are all equal in God's sight, and God washes us clean every time we come to him." Charlie's face glowed as he finished these words.

"I think I know what you mean," I responded. "As a Christian, I've always felt I've fallen short of the mark. I guess you're right, though. If I'm continuously in contact with God, I can experience both cleansing and help. I hadn't thought of being 100 per cent lovable in God's eyes. Maybe I can quit faulting myself and start building myself in God's love. You mentioned having bought love in your life. Do you mind me asking what you meant by that?"

"I don't mind at all," he replied. "But, first, what time is it?"

"Eight o'clock," I said.

"Sorry, I'll have to tell you about that on our next visit. One of my three most important tasks of the day awaits me. I read a bedtime story to my children. We're in Chapter 2 of *Peter the Trout*. Peter is in the middle of a new stream and in trouble. He doesn't realize that all the edible things in the stream aren't safe to eat."

I hugged Charlie's shoulders and said goodbye. Ruth came into the room and wheeled Charlie into the children's bedroom. While I was waiting to say goodbye to her, I thought about Charlie's words — words filled with pain, knowledge and healing. I had a lot to think about between now and our next visit. R

Charlie smiled and asked me to wipe the tears from his face. "Little Charlie will remind us that, no matter what, we are all 100 per cent lovable"

Don Davis is a member of St. Andrew's Church in Aurora, Ont. From 1967 to 1970, he worked with people having lower and upper spinal injuries at Manitoba Rehabilitation Hospital.

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Ajax, Ontario

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Phone: (905) 833-2325
Fax: (905) 833-1326
E-mail: carter@istar.ca

St. Andrew's Memorial Presbyterian Church
Port Credit, Ontario

Organist/Choir Director required January 1, 2002, for a growing, active church with one adult and two children's choirs. The adult choir is rehearsed weekly, and there is one service on Sunday mornings. The children's choirs are directed and rehearsed by others. The pipe organ has a two-manual Casavant console. The organist would be available for weddings and funerals. Familiarity with traditional and contemporary liturgy, and hymnody is a requirement.

Please send applications (résumés) to the attention of: The Search Committee
St. Andrew's Memorial
Presbyterian Church
24 Stavebank Road North
Mississauga, Ontario L5G 2T5
Telephone: 905-278-8907
Fax: 905-278-1295

A united effort

A small, rural congregation and a shipping company team up to make Christmas a little brighter

St. Andrew's Church, Oxford Mills, Ontario, is a small congregation of 20 to 25 families located in a rural village about 55 kilometres southwest of Ottawa. Proving an adage of their own that big things come from small packages, the members of St. Andrew's undertake a mission outreach project every year aimed at helping people in need.

Two years ago, in a combined effort with St. Andrew's Church, Kars, and Osgoode Church, Vernon, the congregation was able to send two 225-kilogram shipments of nearly new clothing and small toys to Davis Inlet in Labrador, and one shipment to Webequite, Ontario.

Last year, in a solo effort, St. Andrew's, Oxford Mills, focused its attention on the Peguis First Nation of Dallas, Manitoba, a community of about 3,000 situated about 195 kilometres north of Winnipeg. They collected 450 kilograms of clothing and toys, enough to share with 2,000 more people in the surrounding communities of Fisher River, Jack Head and Lake St. Martin.

Collecting the donations, as impressive as that might be, was one thing; getting the approximately 30 cartons to Dallas, another. That's where the ingenuity and generosity of Heather and Terry Wills of Wills Transfer came in. They organized the transportation of the goods — at no cost to the congregation. The cartons arrived in Dallas in November, in time for the Christmas season.

By the way, the members of St. Andrew's Church, Oxford Mills, have an obvious connection with the plight of Canada's First Nations people. Their minister, Rev. Gordon Williams, is an aboriginal. He is also the first aboriginal to graduate from the University of Manitoba. R



Two members of a small community team that is accomplishing big things: Terry Wills (left), president of Wills Transfer Ltd., Smiths Falls, Ont., and Ken Janes, elder, St. Andrew's Church, Oxford Mills, Ont.

Ted Siverns



The spur of crisis & the pain of change

We are neither optimists nor pessimists but people of hope

Genesis 8:22, Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, Mark 4:35-41

The persistent and inescapable vision of commercial jets flying innocent people to their deaths as shrapnel for the destruction of others haunts me. The vision of once proud and seemingly permanent buildings collapsing disturbs me.

Like Job sitting on his pile of dung, the messengers keep coming with news that seems to be unceasingly bad. At times like this, we need to remember we are neither optimists nor pessimists but people of hope. Our foundation is not built on the strength of our humanity but on the faithfulness of God. Though the messengers are many and the news too often gloomy, the response of faith is consistent.

> Though the fig tree does not blossom,
> and no fruit is on the vines;
> though the produce of the olive fails
> and the fields yield no food;
> though the flock is cut off from the fold
> and there is no herd in the stalls,
> yet I will rejoice in the LORD;
> I will exult in the God of my salvation.
> GOD, the Lord, is my strength …
> (Habakkuk 3:17-19)

Though the world changes, God's faithfulness remains. In the words of Arthur Hugh Clough in "With Whom Is No Variableness":

> It fortifies my soul to know
> That though I perish, truth is so;
> That wheresoe'er I stray and range,
> Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
> I steadier step when I recall
> That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

Faith is aware that change is a constant. Heraclitus in the sixth century BC astutely observed you could not put your foot into the same river twice. An eastern monarch challenged his wise men to invent an aphorism that would be true and appropriate at all times and in all situations. Their answer: "And this, too, shall pass away." Change should not surprise us.

Nor is change the same as progress. Change may simply be, in the words of Robert Frost, "truth in and out of season." Or it may be like clicking channel changes on the television remote control: different, but not necessarily better and, sometimes, worse. George Burns observed: "It's hard for me to get used to these changing times. I can remember when the air was clean and sex was dirty."

Significant change is rarely brought about by those who are at the centre of power in any organization, including church and state. Organizations are better at dealing with yesterday's problems. And as ideas diminish, the rulebook fattens and procedures imprison. Those who are at the edge, those who have little invested in what is, are most likely to initiate change. As the prophets knew, those who control the reins of power like life the way it is. The prophets also knew that, with a call for change, adversaries quickly emerge. Need we wonder why the radical change Jesus called for met the most positive response from the poor?

Change can be disorienting, painful, disturbing and risky; yet, change is unavoidable

Change is also challenging and exciting as we learn new ways of placing the future into the hands of God.

Crisis spells necessary change and opportunity

The need for change is usually accepted only as a painful response to outside forces that have led to a crisis. These forces may be as diverse as a serious decline in participation and financial support or crashed aeroplanes collapsing security assumptions to ground zero.

Presbyterian quiz #3

1. The Presbyterian Church in Canada was formed in
(a) 1794
(b) 1875
(c) 1853

2. The subordinate standards of our church include
(a) The Book of Bebb
(b) The King James Bible
(c) The Westminster Confession

3. The head of the Presbyterian Church is
(a) The Moderator
(b) Jesus Christ
(c) The Pope

4. The Presbyterian Church is
(a) Catholic
(b) Reformed
(c) Apostolic
(d) All of the above
(e) None of the above

5. The Presbyterian Church is a member of
(a) The World Council of Churches
(b) The Canadian Council of Churches
(c) World Alliance of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches
(d) All of the above
(e) None of the above

See page 49 for the answers.

Change can be disorienting, painful, disturbing and risky; yet, change is unavoidable. Change is also challenging and exciting as we learn new ways of placing the future into the hands of God. Crisis spells necessary change and opportunity.

There are choices for those who would flee from facing change and its consequences. Television and drink, drugs and depression, sports and religion — all can be opiates. Yet, faith knows God works "through all the changing scenes of life."

Faith recognizes there is no security in what is and no blueprint for what might be. Our Leader, crucified by the political and religious powers, taught that the blessings of God are derived from different values than values held by those who proclaim the permanence of what is.

In times of crisis, God has our attention. We are invited to move from "worldly grief" to a grief that leads to repentance and transformation (II Corinthians 7:10). We are challenged to "be transformed by the renewing of [our] minds" (Romans 12:2). We are called to be clothed in our new selves in "the likeness of God" (Ephesians 4:23-24). Our goal is "sanctification," more commonly called "Christ-likeness." "Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own" (Philippians 3:12). R

For discussion and reflection

- Does Genesis 8:22 suggest change or continuity or both?
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 speaks of both purpose and futility. How would you relate this to recent world events?
- Mark 4:35-43 describes a terrifying event for the disciples. How do you respond to this passage and the assertion that the Reign of God continues?

L. E. (Ted) Siverns is the minister of First Church in New Westminster, B.C., and interim director of (Presbyterian) denominational studies at Vancouver School of Theology.

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A mustard seed

Trudy Meyer's short ministry to the people of Mistawasis left a lasting impression



It is definitely a long way from the Netherlands to the Mistawasis reserve in northern Saskatchewan. But, for Trudy Meyer, who viewed the Bible as the most important road map in life, the Mistawasis community was to be the last stop on her life journey.

Born in the Netherlands in 1946, Trudy immigrated to Canada with her family in 1952. Growing up in Nova Scotia, she was active in several church and volunteer groups, as both a youth and an adult. Her energy and dedication for following the map God had drawn for her was, perhaps, never more evident than during the concluding nine years of her life. She earned a community service diploma in New Glasgow, a bachelor of arts at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, and bachelor of theology and master of divinity degrees at The Presbyterian College, Montreal — all the time battling cancer.

In the middle of the Mistawasis reserve, on the top of a hill, sits a little Presbyterian church, its stained glass windows as colourful as prairie wildflowers. Founded more than a century ago by Presbyterian missionaries, Mistawasis Memorial Church had been without a full-time minister for many years. In June 2000, interim moderator Jim McKay contacted Gordon Haynes, associate secretary for Canada Ministries, about the need for a full-time minister at Mistawasis. Over the next few months, the request was considered in consultation with the Native Ministries Committee, and a list of potential ministers compiled. Trudy's profile and her impressive list of priorities for ministry seemed to single her out as the most suitable candidate.

On November 12, Trudy conducted the worship service and preached at Mistawasis Memorial. The congregation was unanimous. On December 17, she was ordained at St. Paul's Church in the East River pastoral charge in Pictou County, Nova Scotia — the church where she attended Sunday school many years ago. On January 16, 2001, two days after preaching her first sermon as the congregation's full-time minister, Trudy was inducted at Mistawasis Memorial.

It seemed to be a match made in heaven. The congregation felt new hope with Trudy's arrival and took to her as if she were one of their own. Trudy took to Mistawasis as if she were native to it. Even a northern Saskatchewan winter couldn't dampen her enthusiasm. This was clear to Trudy's sister, Tilly, when she visited Mistawasis for a week in January. On their way to church on Sunday, the sisters encountered big drifts from the previous evening's snowfall along the gravel road. Trudy simply stepped on the gas in her new 4x4 and plowed through them.

Trudy and Tilly weren't the only ones who made it to church that day. When they arrived, they found Harvey, the church elder, and Wendy, the organist, waiting for them. Even so, it appeared likely the congregation might number only four that morning. But, as the service was beginning, a family entered. Other members followed a few minutes later, and still more after that for about the next half-hour.

In the weeks that followed, besides leading regular worship at her new, beloved church, Trudy conducted two funerals and baptized four children. On Sunday, February 18, Trudy told the congregation her cancer had returned and she would be entering the hospital in Saskatoon for treatment. She also told them she hoped to be back soon. It was to be her last service. On March 8, 2001, Trudy Meyer arrived at her final destination.

To the congregation, it was, as Harvey put it, the quality of Trudy's time with them that mattered, not the quantity. On March 10, Trudy's family drove to Mistawasis Memorial where many of Trudy's friends welcomed them. The furnace had been turned on to warm the church, and candles were placed across the front of the sanctuary. Harvey rang the church bell three times in Trudy's memory. It was a heart-breakingly sorrowful yet beautiful moment. Harvey asked everyone present to stand in a circle and join hands. He prayed that God would help Trudy's family in their grief. Then he gave thanks for God's blessing to the native people of Mistawasis — for the gifts of Trudy's time, love and devotion. R

Based on a tribute written by Tilly Meyer.

Synod of Toronto and Kingston expands role

The 127th meeting of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, held in Orillia, October 16-17, decided to meet for four days next year rather than the usual two. The synod will meet at Elim Lodge, north of Peterborough, the weekend of October 19, 2002. The first two days will be given to study, workshops and worship, followed by business on Monday and Tuesday.

In other matters, the five camps (including two music camps) run by the synod reported increased campers, with Glen Mohr operating at 102 per cent capacity.

Wayne Baswick, minister of St. Paul's Church, Bramalea, was elected moderator, succeeding the synod's first lay moderator, Campbell Steele.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest sees signs of healthy growth

The 96th Synod of Alberta and the Northwest met in Lloydminster (as far east as possible while remaining within Alberta) October 19-21. About 40 people from the Synod of Saskatchewan accepted an invitation to attend the meetings. A pre-synod conference called "Empowering the Laity," presented by Dwight Browns, led into the weekend.

The synod heard an enthusiastic report from the missions committee about church extension work being carried out in Calgary. Another positive report came from the Camp Kannawin committee, whose proposal for a joint camp director and synod youth consultant gained widespread approval from the synod. Terrie-Lee Hamilton of the General Assembly Office and Rev. Gordon Haynes of Canada Ministries also addressed the synod.

Richard Anderson, an elder from Memorial Church, Sylvan Lake, was elected moderator.

Synod of B.C. sings lustily and with good courage

The matter of parity of representation between synod and synodical on two staff accountability groups occupied much of the business of the Synod of British Columbia, meeting October 19-21 at Knox Church, Port Alberni, as the synod continues to feel its way through a new structure. The synod executive has also been asked to continue working toward presenting a job description and funding options for a synod youth worker. Kathy Bell was recognized as co-ordinator of educational ministries and Wayne Stretch as regional minister.

For many, the highlight of the weekend was the program entitled "Contemporary Worship with Integrity: What and Why?" Elaine Meyer of Whitworth Presbyterian Church, Spokane, Washington, and her worship team of Jonathan Moneymaker, Ann Kerberle and Kevin Germer, not only discussed contemporary worship and music, and the issues around their implementation, but also modelled what it is to be worship leaders. Synod members sang old favourites, old favourites with new arrangements and contemporary pieces — all sung (following John Wesley's instructions) "lustily and with good courage."

Rod Ferguson, minister of St. Giles Church, Prince George, was elected moderator, succeeding Rev. Richard Sand of Kerrisdale.



The Hard Knox Choir from Knox Church, Port Alberni, B.C., teaches the synod something about contemporary music.

Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario overcomes geographical distances

The 117th meeting of the Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario took place October 18-20 at First Church, Thunder Bay, Ontario. As has been the custom for the past several years, members of the Women's Missionary Society were invited to attend.

The weekend began with a presbytery-wide service of worship and Communion, with a choir composed from the four congregations in Thunder Bay. When the synod convened the next day, Dale Woods, minister of First Church, Brandon, Manitoba, was elected moderator and Joanne Instance was elected clerk.

A report by synod regional staffperson Rev. Sidney Chang recommended the synod spend more energy and resources on grassroots training. In keeping with the FLAMES year of the laity, the regional council will use appropriate portions of the contract funds to support laypeople in education and leadership.

Rev. Bob Williamson, resource leader from the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center in Lombard, Illinois, led a workshop on "Conflict Resolution Skills for Churches."

PCC welcomes government compensation but continues to emphasize need for healing and reconciliation

On Monday, October 29, Deputy Prime Minister Herb Gray announced Canada would proceed to pay compensation for valid claims of sexual or physical abuse at residential schools at the rate of 70 per cent. Stephen Kendall, principal clerk of General Assembly, and Ian Morrison, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, call the government's move to enable some plaintiffs to put their legal cases behind them "welcome news." Kendall and Morrison have been participating in the church-government negotiations on behalf of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

"Seventy per cent is a good start," says Kendall. "Without the church committing to the other 30 per cent — and that remains a matter for negotiation — we would intend to participate in any settlement conference or reasonable alternative dispute resolution that deals with specific lawsuits [the church] is facing.

"The church continues to balance a prudent legal defence with a desire to assist plaintiffs with moving past the legal roadblocks to fair compensation and then on to healing and reconciliation," Kendall says.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is currently facing about 18 legal claims from approximately 100 former students at two native residential schools connected with the church.

John Moir's contributions recognized by history society

Many friends and former students of John Moir joined the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History in honouring him at a dinner and presentation held during the society's annual meeting September 29.

John Moir is well-known as the author of *Enduring Witness*, the highly acclaimed history of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. According to national church archivist Kim Arnold, his engaging style of writing has made history more readable and more accessible to people who might not normally pick up a history book.

Moir's list of accomplishments is long. He is professor emeritus of the University of Toronto history department, past archivist of the Presbyterian Church, longtime member of the General Assembly Committee on History and past-president of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History. His academic works in terms of researching, writing and teaching on various aspects of religious history are numerous. He is currently the editor for the Committee on History's second volume of biographies of women in the church, *More Gifts and Graces*, and is writing a history of the former Synod of Hamilton and London.

Pictured congratulating him are Rev. John Johnston (left), president of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History, and Michael Miller, the society's secretary.



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Jack McIntosh remembered with monument

A monument to the life and work of Jack McIntosh among Korean people in Japan was unveiled in front of the Toronto Korean Church in a ceremony on October 14. Jack and his wife, Beth, were not only involved with the Korean community in Japan, but they also maintained a close relationship with Korean Christians in Canada, especially the congregation of Toronto Korean Church where they worshipped whenever they visited Toronto.

Cheol-soon Park, minister of Toronto Korean Church, referred to the role of special stones or monuments in Israelite culture and, in particular, the Stone of Help or "Ebenezer" that was erected by Samuel (I Samuel 7:12). Park's hope is that the McIntosh stone will also be a stone of help and an inspiration to all who visit the church. The engraving on the stone is in English, apart from the Korean name by which Jack was known.

The General Assembly of the Korean Christian Church in Japan, meeting in the last week of October, also held a special service to honour the ministry of the McIntoshes.



National Presbyterian Museum

A van pulls up to a church across the street from the Don Jail in Toronto. The van, driven by a volunteer from Ingleside, Ontario, was loaned by an elder in Cornwall. The gas was paid for by contributions from individuals in eastern Ontario and by a grant from the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry. Inside the van are treasures from the past, such as the oak arches, sounding board and pulpit that once graced the 19th-century sanctuary in Merrickville. There is a hand-wrought lamp and furnishings from an abandoned church in Monkland.

After eight years of planning, the National Presbyterian Museum is underway. Supported entirely by individual contributions (no *Presbyterians Sharing...* funds are involved) and the work of volunteers, the museum is under the aegis of the General Assembly Committee on History. To house the facility, 556 square metres of space have been donated rent-free by St. John's Church.

The focal point of the museum is a collection of thousands of Communion tokens, some dating to the 18th century, including specimens from the earliest congregations in British North America. There are also replicas of a minister's study and congregational library, church group uniforms, plates, banners, hands-on displays and more.

An advisory committee composed of museum curators has assembled state-of-the-art computer hardware and software, the gift of the Stanford Reid Fund. This will enable people around the world to view artifacts in the museum's collection over the Internet.

For more information on the National Presbyterian Museum, to offer assistance, or to book group tours, call 905-528-2730, fax 905-526-8697, e-mail drjohna.johnston@sympatico.ca. Volunteers are needed (one day a month) for housekeeping, cataloguing, acting as guides, etc. Contributions, payable to The Presbyterian Church in Canada and designated National Presbyterian Museum, can be forwarded to the Finance Department, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7.

Robert MacMillan honoured by PCBC



Rev. Robert G. MacMillan, a former general manager of the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation (PCBC) was honoured recently at a luncheon recognizing his retirement as director of the PCBC. Since its incorporation in 1968, PCBC has had four general managers, Robert MacMillan being the second. He is joined in the photo by the fourth and current general manager, James Seidler (left), and the third general manager, Rev. Ralph Kendall (right). The first person to hold the position was the late Rev. David McCullough.

news scan

Canada's Catholic press shrinks by two

Canada's Roman Catholic press is losing two of its stalwarts this winter when *Our Family* and *Companion* will cease publication. Both monthly glossy magazines have been losing money and subscribers for years. According to the *Catholic Register*, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate were subsidizing *Our Family* to the tune of $80,000 per year. *Companion* was costing the Conventional Franciscans of North America $25,000 to $30,000 a year.

Scottish church earns Nae Luck Award

A Nae Luck Award goes to the lovely Pettinain Church in Lanarkshire, currently owned by the Scottish Redundant Churches Trust, which threw open its doors for a Songs of Praise service to raise money for the disused building. People were asked to choose their favourite hymns. A collection was also taken. The service proceeded smoothly until, as the *Lanark Gazette* reported, "In an unusual end to the service, the organ had to be carried out after the nine hymns proved too much for the elderly instrument and it caught fire." (*Glasgow Herald Diary*)

Most clergy grappling with burnout, survey finds

Nearly eight of 10 clergy are either badly "burnt out" or having trouble coping with the stresses of their position, according to the results of a census-style survey of churches in Australia. The survey showed four per cent of clergy were suffering extreme burnout. Another 19 per cent were finding burnout a major issue in their lives, and another 56 per cent were "borderline to burnout" but coping. Only 21 per cent said burnout wasn't an issue in their lives. More than half of those surveyed felt their training had been inadequate. (*ENI*)

Vicar hopes to boldly go where no priest has gone before

A priest who is an enthusiast about space hopes to take his interest to greater heights — as a chaplain with the international space station. Ken Clapham, an Anglican vicar from Over Kellet, near Carnforth, northern England, has been in contact with NASA about the possibility. "Amazingly, they said no one had ever suggested a chaplain before," he said. Clapham sees the role as a "mission opportunity," although he stresses he would minister to crew members of all faiths aboard the station. (*ENI*)

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Check out the *Record*'s children's page on page 50. Then link to more activities online! Go to **www.presbyterian.ca/record** and click on **Called to wonder**.

briefly noted

Mission staff departures and arrivals
Arrivals: *Heather Jones*, from Malawi, mid-December.

Deaths: *David T. Craig*, Oct. 24, minister of l'Église réformée St-Paul in Repentigny, Quebec. Former minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and Presbyterian missionary in Nigeria. Gained fame under unfortunate circumstances during the Biafran war in the late 1960s when his photo appeared in the *Star Weekly* with a gun pointed at his head. *Elizabeth Leitch*, Oct. 19, longtime member, trustee and elder at Calvin Church, Toronto. First woman to hold post of chief economist for Imperial Bank of Commerce. Member of Bladen Royal Commission on the Automotive Industry, 1960-61, which led to historic Canadian/U.S. Auto Pact.

The *real* fall classic: The softball game between PCC church offices and its opponent on Oct. 13. Although the pugnacious Presbyterians played decently and, more or less, in order, and had the opposition on the brinks of defeat, the final score read: Brinks 17: Church Offices 15.

other news

Congregation walks labyrinth for peace

The congregation of Anam-Chara, a mission charge of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in northwest Calgary, is using the recent terrorist attacks in the United States as motivation to hasten its construction of a prayer labyrinth on the property where the congregation hopes to place a church eventually.

The labyrinth was spray-painted onto the ground on September 22, and members of Anan-Chara (Gaelic for "soul friend") outlined it with stones. A local contractor donated his time and machinery to dig up, move and place the larger rocks.

The labyrinth is one of the largest in Canada at 37 metres in diameter. A trip into it and out again covers 1.3 kilometres.

Rev. Drew Strickland, minister of Anan-Chara, says a number of factors surrounding the terrorist attacks prompted the church to proceed with the labyrinth's construction. For one thing, the church property is located on a busy western approach to the Calgary airport and is plainly visible from the air. On September 26, the congregation held a candlelight walk through the labyrinth to pray for peace and justice in light of the horrific events in New York City, Washington and Pennsylvania.

"Given the role of the commercial aircraft in the tragedy and the shocks it sent through the air travel industry, we thought it appropriate to conduct an event that could be witnessed by passengers aboard flights coming in to land," says Strickland. Participants were encouraged to place a stone as a tribute to someone who died and to mark something significant in their own lives.

Anan-Chara's neighbours have taken note of the congregation's activity and have been asking lots of questions. Especially touching, says Strickland, was the gesture of a Muslim man who runs a local bottle depot. He made a donation to cover the cost of refreshments served on the evening of the walk. (*From a report in **Christian Week***)

Ministers build bridges in wake of September 11

Some ministers in Ottawa's east end have put their concerns about racial violence arising from the September 11 terrorist attacks into action. Don Collar of Bilberry Baptist Church, Dennis Gruver of New Wine Community Church and Jim Statham of Grace Presbyterian Church in Orleans, along with Christian businessman Gunter Rochow and Abdul Rashid, a leader of Ottawa's Muslim community, have offered to speak at Orleans high schools on "Building Bridges in the Community after September 11."

The action was prompted by a desire to foster tolerance and understanding in the community in the wake of the vicious beating of a local Muslim youth on September 15.

At the group's initial meeting in mid-September, the discussion ranged from identifying the roots of violence to what Christians can do to help curb this kind of prejudice and hostility. (*From a report in **Christian News**, Ottawa*)

Hymn-books from Canada arrive safely in Guyana

More than 4,000 (4,230 to be precise) copies of the 1972 *Book of Praise*, collected from Presbyterian churches across Canada, arrived safely at St. Andrew's Church, Georgetown, Guyana, and are already being used by the church choir. The Presbytery of Guyana estimates there will be enough copies to equip all the churches within its bounds, enabling all Presbyterians in Guyana to sing from the same book.

The collection and packaging of the hymn-books were overseen by Hugh Lloyd, a volunteer with the national church offices. The cost was underwritten by a generous donation from Rev. Will and Ginny Wellman, who served at St. Andrew's, Georgetown, years ago, and by a matching grant from the Presbyterian Foundation of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Esther McIlveen

When Christmas parties go too far

Office parties often end up denigrating sex, God, church and marginalized people

The season of Christmas and New Year's brings an avalanche of parties. Some leave you with a sense of camaraderie and chuckles. Others make you wish you had spent the money on something deserving, and you head for a good hot shower upon arriving home.

More than 30 years later, I still remember my first office party. As the evening wore on, my bosses, who were gentlemen in the office, made fools of themselves. I left early feeling disillusioned.

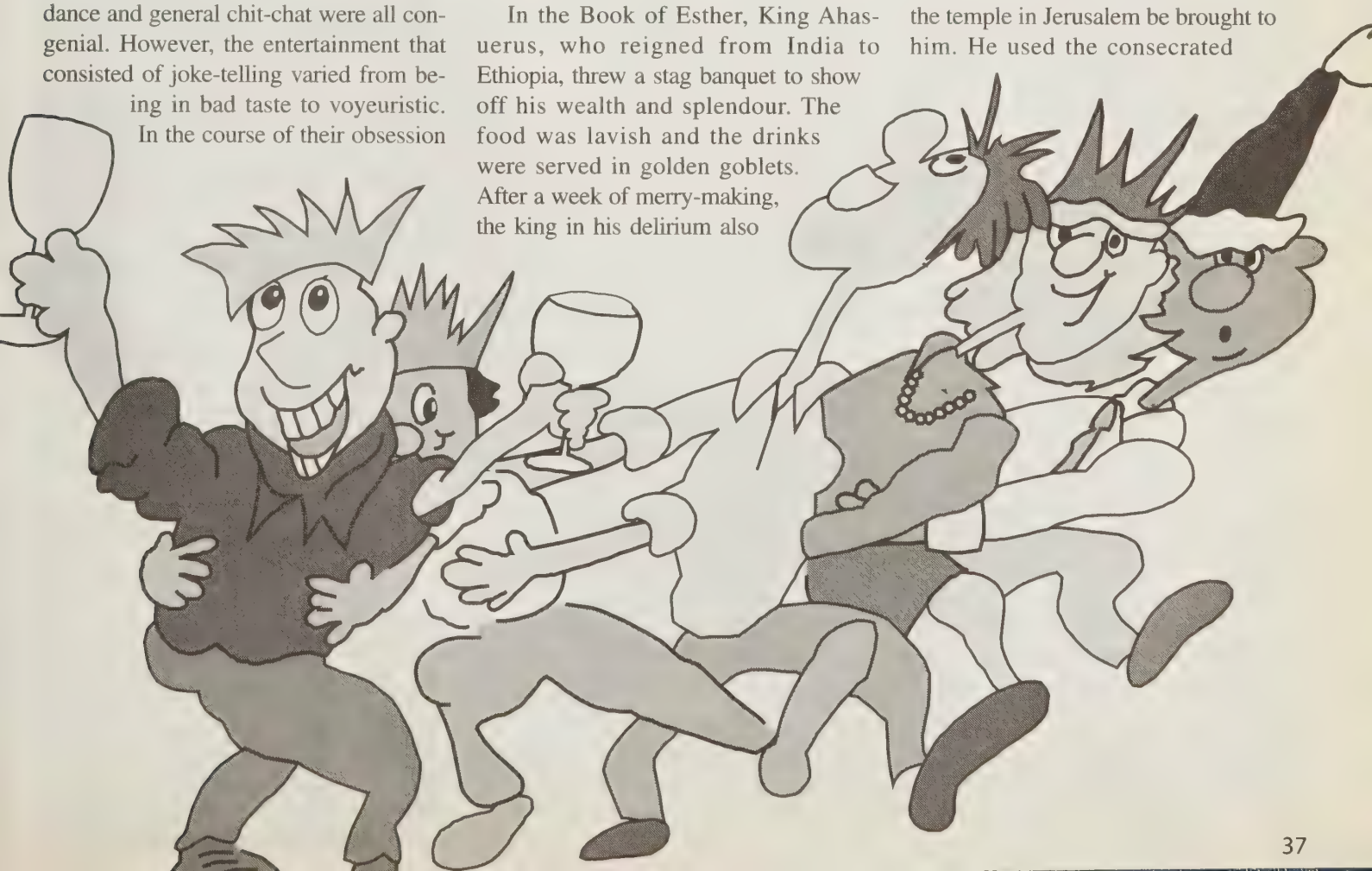
Last year, my husband and I were part of a large prestigious party. The food, dance and general chit-chat were all congenial. However, the entertainment that consisted of joke-telling varied from being in bad taste to voyeuristic. In the course of their obsession in trying to outdo each other, both women and men denigrated sex, God, church and marginalized people. I realized I was living in a world at odds with the Kingdom of God.

Many analysts have observed a "coarsening of North American culture." The party demonstrated that some of the adults are no different from teenagers who enjoy the shocking lyrics of rapper Eminem whose music is filled with violence, profanity, vulgarity and immorality.

Scripture gives us insight into three parties where things got out of control.

In the Book of Esther, King Ahasuerus, who reigned from India to Ethiopia, threw a stag banquet to show off his wealth and splendour. The food was lavish and the drinks were served in golden goblets. After a week of merry-making, the king in his delirium also wanted to make a display of his beautiful wife, Queen Vashti. When she refused to participate, the king was furious. He was also afraid Vashti's performance would influence other women to follow suit and disobey their husbands. Male egos were at stake, so Vashti promptly lost her crown. The party had gone too far.

In the Book of Daniel, King Belshazzar held an impressive dinner party for a thousand of his lords. After the drinking, this Bonaparte of conquest instructed that the sacred vessels of gold and silver his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the temple in Jerusalem be brought to him. He used the consecrated



goblets to serve wine to his wives, concubines and lords. In their passion, the crowd began praising their material gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone. Then, mysteriously, the fingers of a man's hand interrupted the frenzy and wrote something on the wall of the king's palace. The king's revelry stopped. Trembling, he called the enchanters and astrologers to decipher the writing. Daniel was brought in and announced that the king's days were numbered because he had been found wanting. That night, King Belshazzar was slain. The party had gone too far.

King Herod, who ruled during Jesus' time, threw a stag party on his birthday. Salome, Herodias's daughter, danced a sensuous dance that tickled Herod so much he vowed to give the young girl anything she wanted. Salome checked with her mother, and the vindictive woman asked for John the Baptist's head. The prophet had challenged Herod about his adulterous relationship with Herodias. Salome's petition made Herod feel remorseful but, because he felt he could not recant his oath without losing face, the request was granted. The party had gone too far.

In all four parties, things escalated when egos and alcohol were mixed. There were excesses of food, noise, drink and bravadoes. There was an appeal to mob instinct and to outdo one another in crossing boundaries of good taste. Even then (apart from Vashti), as now, women proved they can hold their own with men at unruly parties.

In all four parties, things escalated when egos and alcohol were mixed. There were excesses of food, noise, drink and bravadoes. There was an appeal to mob instinct and to outdo one another in crossing boundaries of good taste

Christians who are invited to parties have several choices. They can check out the type of party and, if it is in bad taste, they can decline. Or they can leave early as I did when a young secretary. If you decide you need to attend (like my husband and I who felt obligated because of his position), you can write a letter to those responsible for the entertainment. I wrote a letter to the head of the institution and told him how shocked and offended I was at the obscene talk about things I held sacred.

As the fever grew at our party, the master of ceremonies asked the crowd if they wanted clean jokes or dirty jokes. The crowd shouted "Dirty!" All I could think of was the scene of the Crucifixion when the multitudes cried out "Crucify him!" My husband approached the man who was responsible for the entertainment and challenged him why he didn't call a halt to the upsurge of jokes. The man who is a churchgoer confessed, "I felt I had let Barabbas loose."

Parties can often be a mixture of murkiness. They spell fun and a freedom from restraint. As Christians, we are called to be light in the world. By speaking out, we make others aware (including church people) about the contamination of the sacred. God is present in whatever we engage in. Parties matter to God. R

Esther McIlveen writes a religious column called Grace Notes for the *Richmond Review* in Richmond, B.C.

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Deanne Lomheim



My General Assembly experience

How attending General Assembly inspired one young adult observer

Being a young adult representative (YAR) at the 127th General Assembly in June 2001 was an amazing experience for me. And I met amazing people from all walks of life in Canada and from various mission partners overseas. It helped me understand what it means to be a part of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

During the briefing sessions, I learned about the good work being done nationally and internationally by groups such as the *Presbyterian Record*, Presbyterian World Service and Development, and the Women's Missionary Society. Hearing the enthusiasm of the speakers made me realize these were not bureaucratic agencies but groups of dedicated people committed to doing Christ's work in the world.

As the sessions of General Assembly progressed, I began to understand and appreciate the polity of our church. Rather than having an exclusive group of ordained people make decisions, dialogue between young and old, the ordained and laity is encouraged. No one person pretends to have all the answers. Each person is responsible for trying to discern God's will, even if this results in differing opinions. The importance of standing up for what we believe struck me as one decision came to a standing vote. First, those in favour stood to be counted; then, those opposed stood to be counted. It reminded me of the courage and integrity it takes for people all over the world to stand up for what they believe.

Each day, the YARs gathered to discuss the day's events and issues. Many spoke to the General Assembly on issues ranging from the new catechism to freemasonry. It was good for all of us, particularly those who don't have many youth in their home congregations, to meet other young people committed to their faith and to their church. While opinions varied as much among the YARs as among commissioners, all of us tried to discern God's will in each situation. Our late-night chats often centred on how to live every aspect of our lives to the glory of God and how to stand up for what we believe in the midst of a non-Christian world.



The young adult representatives to the 127th General Assembly, June 2001.

This year's Moderator, Joe Reed, described North America as the "spiritual Third World." He invited the ecumenical guests to send their missionaries from places like Malawi and Mauritius to us in North America. After meeting with Joe and hearing of his missionary work in Central America, then attending the E. H. Johnson luncheon recognizing the work of David Pandy in Eastern Europe, many YARs wanted to be a part of the energy and enthusiasm of missionary work overseas. We decided, however, that "mission" is not limited to ordained people working overseas; it is the responsibility of everyone. "Mission" is synonymous with "ministry."

The theme of this year's FLAMES initiative is "Equipping the Laity." That includes equipping the laity to fulfil their mission to minister to those around them. Ministry is for the ordained and the laity, and it can take place across the ocean or across the street. Ministry is about caring for one another.

Being a part of the 127th General Assembly taught me the importance of standing up for what I believe, the strength that comes when we join together to minister to one another, and the joy of living life to the glory of God. The experience at General Assembly brought the lyrics of a children's hymn to life for me: "I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together! All who follow Jesus, all around the world! Yes we're the church together!" R

Deanne Lomheim was a Young Adult Representative to the 127th General Assembly from the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod.



THE SIGN FOR Briarwood Church, Beaconsfield, Que., reads "Welcome," but it is unclear to what! Throughout the summer, there was extensive roadwork done to the street fronting the church. As this involved many workers, there was a need for the Johnny-on-the-Spot!

THE FLAMES INITIATIVE was clearly in Rev. Jeff Loach's train of thought when he designed an HQ-scale boxcar for presentation to Rev. Deane Cassidy at a roast recognizing Deane's resignation as treasurer of the Synod of Southwestern Ontario. Both Jeff and Deane are model railroaders.





A NEW HERITAGE CABINET, given in memory of long-serving elder William Guthrie by his wife, Margaret, and family, was dedicated at Paris Church, Paris, Ont. Cabinetmaker Bob McAlpine is pictured (centre) in front of the cabinet with Rev. Stan Cox and Mary Williams, daughter of William Guthrie.



ANGUS MACLEOD was honoured by the Boularderie congregation, Cape Breton, for his 50 years of service as an elder. Angus and his wife, Christene (right), are pictured with Rev. Ritchie Robinson and clerk of session Mervyn MacAuley.



THE CONGREGATION OF Caven Church, Exeter, Ont., completed a millennium project that both recorded the names of members and adherents and raised $5,000. After they purchased the small blocks at the bottom of the wall hanging, the members names were embroidered on them. The wall hanging was made by Lori Walterkins (far right), who grew up in the congregation, and quilted by (from left) Donna Webster, Rev. Lillian Wilton and Judy Dalrymple, Lori's mother.

Please note: Photos submitted for People & Places must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they are to be returned. Also, please try to ensure all pictures are clear and do not include a multitude of people. Colour or black-and-white photos are acceptable, but negatives and slides cannot be used. Thank you.



PARTICIPATING IN WMS Mission Awareness Sunday at St. Andrew's Church, Welland, Ont., were: (L to R) Nancy Leslie, Dolores MacLeod, Margaret Hicks, Shirley Barnhart and Rev. Ron Sharpe.



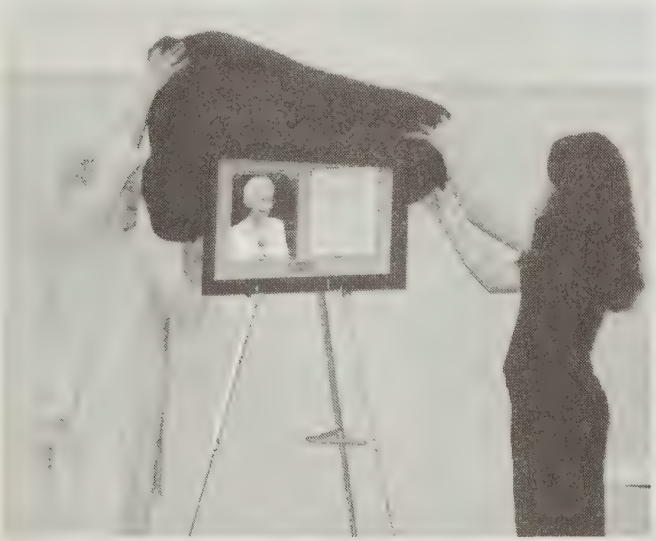
CLERK OF SESSION Don Hazell of St. Mark's Church, Don Mills, Ont., prepares to start the sixth annual Walk-Run-Wheel-athon, assisted by Bev Elliott, executive director of St. Mark's Support Services. Thirty-six adults and children participated in the event, raising almost $3,000, which will be used to provide assistive devices and recreation for 20 physically challenged tenants.



THE CONGREGATION OF St. Giles Church, Sarnia, Ont., presented a plaque to the family of charter member Florence Date on the occasion of her 100th birthday. She is pictured with her great-great-granddaughter, Simone Date. Florence has since passed away. (Photo compliments of *The Observer*, Sarnia)



ST. JAMES CHURCH, Truro, N.S., celebrated the 75th anniversary of the formation of the congregation with a special worship service, pot-luck dinner and book launch for its new church history. Charter member Anne Dilts and Allan MacKinnon, who attended the first Sunday school, prepare to cut the anniversary cake.



THE CONGREGATION OF Haney Church, Maple Ridge, B.C., dedicated a new $450,000 addition to the church. The Joan Sloan Hall includes a 225-square-metre gym, two new offices, lobby, elevator and storage space. Construction also included major renovations to the church kitchen. Unveiling a commemorative plaque are June Cathro, senior member of the congregation, and Kaitlin Shields, the youngest member.

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, Petrolia, Ont., hosted an exhibition of the Canadian Bible Society's collection of 48 pewter repoussé panels by Albert Marschner Gilles, entitled *The Life of Christ*, during Holy Week. Pictured with one of the panels are congregational members Janice Saunders (left) and Helen Clark.





HOPING TO PROVIDE a little March break, the Sunday school, junior and senior youth groups, and members and adherents of Leaside Church, Toronto, prepared 15 "care packages" to send to university and college students from Leaside to let them know the church was thinking about them during the stress of final exams. Packing the decorated shoeboxes are Nancy Quarin, Joan Norris and Caroline Cassin.



MAYBE IT'S THE WATER! Three members of Knox Church, Bracebridge, Ont. — Agnes Roy (left), Bruce McLean and Lydia Biddle — celebrated their 90th birthdays recently.

ELSPETH ELLIOT'S 60th anniversary as a member of the senior choir was celebrated by the congregation of Knox Church, Guelph, Ont. Congratulating Elspeth are Rev. Elizabeth Jobb (left), music director Martin Bauer and clerk of session Vera Teasdale (right).



EMMA GIRARD represented the fourth generation of her family to be baptized in the same christening gown when she was baptized at St. Andrew's Church, Ajax, Ont. The other three generations — great-grandmother Flo Ritchie, grandmother June Saetens and mother Beverly Girard — are pictured with Rev. Everett Briard.





VISITORS TO Melville Church, Scarborough, Ont., might have thought the congregation was going to the birds when they entered the church on Earth Day, April 22. Greeting them was Miya and her friend and spokesperson, Sandra Clark, who gave a discourse on the stewardship of the Earth.

THE CONGREGATION OF Calvin Church, Abbotsford, B.C., recognized Lorraine Loewen's 20 years of service as organist and choir director following a recent 9:30 a.m. service. Although Lorraine has retired from these duties, she continues to be a member of the choir and handbell choir. A fund has been established in her honour to purchase handbell chimes. The choir also held a potluck supper at which gifts were presented to Lorraine (right) and to Margaret Ward (left), who was retiring as pianist.





THE PRESBYTERY OF Halifax/Lunenburg held a two-day retreat for elders and ministers at the Mount St. Vincent Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity in Halifax. Rev. Jim Czegledi of the Life and Mission Agency was the guest leader.

EIGHT NEW ELDERS were elected to the session of Knox Church, Tiverton, Ont. They are (L to R): Ian Mitchell, Wendy Parry, Lillian Leggett, Tom Scott, Mynona Paige, Mary Duthie, Ted Stewart and Burton Eskrick.



THE CHILDREN OF Trinity Church (York Mills), Toronto, decided to "fan the flames" when they held Sunday school in the park while their parents met in church. Besides a campfire, the children enjoyed a hike, games, crafts, singing and an outdoor service.

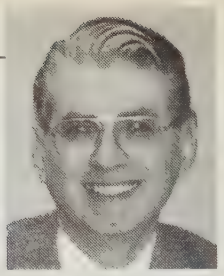




SEVEN NEW ELDERS were inducted at Knox Church, Bobcaygeon, Ont. In the back row (L to R) are: Philip Mayville, Charles Holman, Myra Coene, Madeline Whyte and Rev. Doug Scott. In the front are: Kaye Jamieson, Carole Jones and Gini Aiken.

Please note: The *Record* does not usually include photos of new elders in People and Places. We receive so many submissions, we must, unfortunately, set some limits. However, signs of growth in the church should not be taken for granted and, rather than disappointing patiently waiting congregations, we make occasional exceptions. In return, we respectfully ask our readers to exercise some restraint in submitting photos.

Tony Plomp



Suffer the little children

question: *How would you handle a problem with infants in the sanctuary? Our church has a nursery to which most parents take their infants, but some parents refuse to make use of it. The ensuing noise the babies make is distracting to the rest of the congregation, particularly to those wearing hearing aids.*

We try to be a "child friendly" congregation. Over the past several years, we have intentionally involved children and youth in many of our regular worship activities. Ours is a very "live" sanctuary (mostly wood, little carpeting) which is great for singing. It also means, however, the slightest cough or hymn-book dropped or infant squeal instantly overpowers anything being said from the pulpit.

I am now of an age when my hearing is not as acute as it used to be. I am much more aware than ever before how difficult it is to follow a speech when there are extraneous sounds. In fact, I have adopted the practice that, when reading, praying or preaching, I will repeat a word or phrase whenever I am interrupted by such extraneous sounds.

We are fortunate that, apart from having a regular nursery, we have mature and understanding parents who, for whatever reason, do not want to use the nursery but who, when their infants or young children begin to fuss, take them out of the sanctuary into the church hall. We are also ready to equip such parents with the church's FM audio-receivers so they can continue listening to the service.

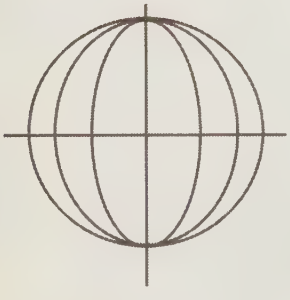
I am much more aware than ever before how difficult it is to follow a speech when there are extraneous sounds

In the life of this congregation, a few parents have not been as understanding of the needs of others. Instead of sitting in the (carpeted) rear of the sanctuary, as common sense might indicate, they inevitably move to the front seats as if to say, "We really want you all to hear and see our kids and what they're up to."

We should be glad to have parents with infants and children in the church these days and should make every effort to meet their particular needs. At the same time, parents with children should exercise consideration of the many older members of the congregation whose hearing is becoming slowly impaired. Is not consideration and respect for others at the heart of what we are about? R

Please send questions for Rev. Tony Plomp to tony_plomp@telus.net or 4020 Lancelot Dr., Richmond, B.C. V7C 4S3.

Will you serve?



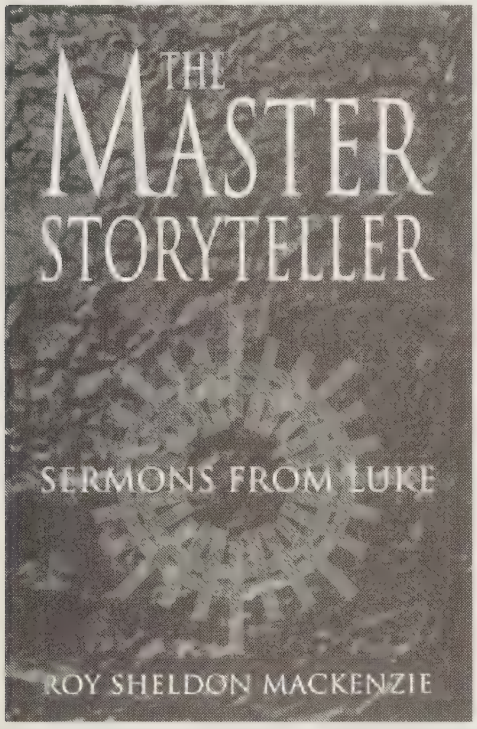
PWS&D is a dynamic agency responsible for the relief, development and refugee work of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. We are looking for people willing to submit their names for potential appointments to the PWS&D national committee and various ecumenical bodies. These volunteers help develop policies, approve funding, monitor programs, and promote and represent PWS&D. Appointments are made by the Life and Mission Agency (LMA), which seeks a balance of gender, clergy/laity, professional expertise and geography. Send your résumé to PWS&D indicating your areas of interest and expertise, and we will keep it on file for the LMA's consideration as vacancies arise.

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The Master Storyteller: Sermons from Luke *by Roy Sheldon MacKenzie (Fairway, 2001, $21.50). Reviewed by James Ross Dickey.*

For the past 30 or 40 years, sermons have seldom made it into book form except at the author's (or his or her congregation's) expense. Once the main stock-in-trade



for purveyors of Confirmation gifts and Christmas presents for the sheltering pious, they linger now on the back shelves of church libraries or surface among the literary flotsam and jetsam on rummage sale tables.

MacKenzie's latest, his fifth, takes a well-deserved place in a lively mini-renaissance of interest in preaching and in the sermon as a publishable literary form. Moreover, it occupies a place unlike any other I have come across.

Drawing on his favourite New Testament author, Luke, for his texts, MacKenzie honours that superb stylist in his own unmistakable voice. Luke's preference for human interest, for example in the parables he chooses, is echoed in these sermons by wonderful contemporary parables. They are drawn carefully from life (from the author's extensive experience as preacher, pastor and counsellor to parishioners, students and faculty), garnered in a lifetime devoted to the church as a minister of Word and sacraments and to scholarship as a professor of New Testament and homiletics.

His style is inimitable. The sermons are reproduced as he typed them in the original manuscript: the lines are divided like blank verse, but the narrative, at times poetic, is as unambiguous and accessible as the crispest prose. Therein lies his greatest gift as preacher and writer.

I first heard MacKenzie in First Church, Montreal. His congregation cut across all normal demographic profiles — containing the poor and the wealthy, the highly educated and the illiterate, and even the criminal and the law-abiding. I marvelled then, as I do now having read this book, at his ability to speak and write in such a way that hearts and minds were touched whatever they brought of their life experiences to those pews. The same phenomenon awaits the reader, though it would be a delight to have these sermons available on tape, in his own voice, as many who have heard him can testify.

The first sermon in the collection was preached during the Christmas season, on New Year's Day. As a gift for the Christmas season, even for someone who has never heard, much less read, a sermon, it would be hard to do better. They follow the order of Luke's narrative with two dips into Luke's sequel, the Book of Acts. MacKenzie's understanding of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, to mention but one of the sermons, will surprise and delight many, although it might raise an eyebrow here and there. His paraphrasing of Luke's dialogue in every sermon brings to his exegesis a sense of being there.

In an era of flamboyant folksiness and gimmicky grabs for attention, of ersatz spirituality that depends on novelty and volume, MacKenzie's voice is needed. The stories are not scattered about like raisins in a bun, simply to add flavour or to vary the texture, nor are they set up in the tired "That reminds me ... " wheezes of too many who fancy themselves storytellers. They grow out of Luke's words as naturally and as eloquently as Luke put them down. And they are told with an understanding of the human condition and of the gospel that makes identification unbelaboured and revelation unmistakable.

Those who regularly read his column in this magazine will need little persuasion, but I will say it anyway: herein is substance for the soul.

James Ross Dickey is minister of St. Paul's Church in Hamilton, Ont.

Ever Heard a Pelican Preach? *by A. Gardiner Skelly (Self-published, 2001, $14). Reviewed by John Congram.*

Although born in Ireland and ordained by the Presbyterian Church of England, A. Gardiner Skelly spent most of his ministry in The United Church of Canada,



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including 22 years as senior minister at Ryerson United Church in Hamilton, Ontario. In retirement, he left the United Church and now attends St. Giles Presbyterian in St. Catharines, Ontario.

Skelly has self-published this volume of 27 sermons, ranging from the Church Year to two sermons on the humour of Jesus. As you read these sermons, you sense that here is a preacher who enjoyed the task and did it with persuasion and imagination. Two of the sermons, in particular, display this latter characteristic. "An Easter Carol" is a resurrection fantasy with apologies to Charles Dickens, and the "Poseidon Adventure" explores Christian symbolism in contemporary cinema.

All the sermons display the best in the Presbyterian preaching tradition — substantial, biblical and tied to the real world. They speak to each generation because they confront issues that every generation faces — anxiety, loneliness, tragedy and loss of faith.

Listening Carefully to Jesus
by R. E. O. White (Eerdmans, 2000, $20.25). Reviewed by Zander Dunn.

I highly recommend this book to everyone without qualification. It is a most helpful presentation of what Jesus had to say on a host of topics.

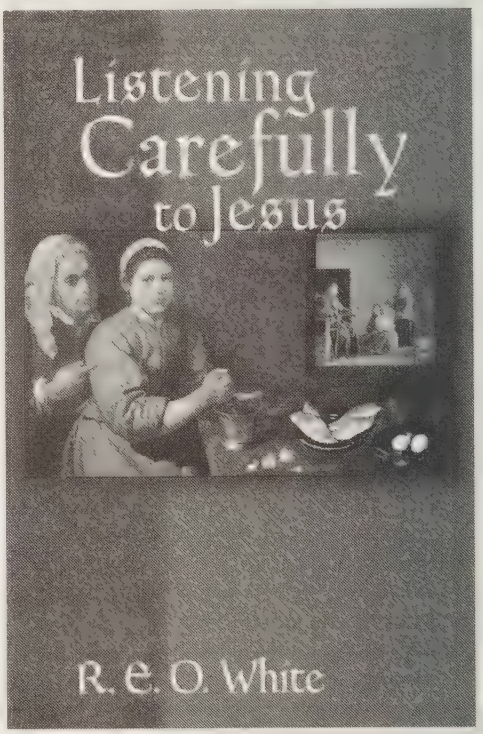
In presenting Jesus as a teacher, the author carefully examines the language Jesus used. He points out language is more than words on a page — it is also the inflection and timbre of the voice, the smile on the face, the stance of the speaker. Most of those non-verbal clues we cannot recapture; but there are some we can, and he rightly points them out.

Jesus' humour comes through clearly in many places most of us miss. Jesus was also sarcastic and ironic at times; yet, most readers overlook those aspects of his words. Indeed, humour, irony and sarcasm change the meaning of his words entirely. Jesus employed exaggeration sometimes, as did many of his compatriots, to stress a point — a good reason not to take everything even Jesus said literally.

Some of the excellent chapters include "Jesus on the Old Testament," "Parables, and Other Devices" and "Jesus on the Place of Women in Religion and Society." To have what Jesus said about women in one chapter is worth the price of the book in itself.

The only chapter I had some difficulty with was "Jesus' Idea of the Church," but only because I contend the author ascribed to Jesus words that came, I think, from the church and the Gospel writers rather than from Jesus.

Of great interest to me was the way the author shows how Jesus did not make grand statements on racial issues but implied things. Jesus let his silences speak louder than words.



Perhaps the most important and provocative chapters are left to the last: "Jesus on Himself — and Us" and "Jesus on the Future."

Anyone interested in Jesus will find this book a valuable resource.

Zander Dunn, in retirement, ministers part time at St. Paul's Church, Amherst Island, Ont.

Most books reviewed may be purchased through The Book Room, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, Ont. M3C 1J7. Prices include shipping and handling but not GST. Do not send payment with order. An invoice will follow. Please include name and location of congregation. Toll-free order line: 1-800-619-7301, ext. 301, e-mail: bookroom@presbyterian.ca.

DEATHS

MACLEAN, THE REV. DR. CHARLES, member on the Appendix to the Roll, the Presbytery of Westminster, British Columbia, passed away in the peace of the Lord on August 1, 2001, after a lengthy illness.

During a long and distinguished career, Dr. Maclean served congregations of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. He received the degree of Doctor of Divinity *(honoris causa)* from The Presbyterian College, Montreal, in 1958.

During the Second World War, Dr. Maclean served overseas with the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders as chaplain and was mentioned in dispatches from the front for his "gallant and distinguished service." Upon the conclusion of the war, Dr. Maclean served the congregation in Lachute, Quebec, from 1947 to 1953, after which he once again responded to the call to become a chaplain, this time with the Royal Canadian Navy, serving until 1968, concluding his career as Chaplain of the Fleet. From 1968 to 1979, Dr. Charlie, as he was affectionately known by all who knew him, served as minister to congregations in Dresden, Ontario; Sackville, New Brunswick; and Iroquois, Ontario. He retired from full-time service in 1979 but was appointed upon his move to Richmond, B.C., as part-time pastoral assistant to Richmond Presbyterian Church, where he served until 1985, eventually regarding this congregation as his church home.

Dr. Charlie was beloved by all as a pastor and friend. He lived his faith as he proclaimed it from the pulpit, showing kindness to all, no matter what their status and situation in life. He believed that in preaching every minister should "always speak a good word for Jesus," a motto that guided his preaching ministry. His devotion to Christ and the church was unquestioned and he left a rich legacy of memories to all who knew him.

Dr. Maclean is survived by his beloved wife, Marnie; his children, Joan Axford (Don), Heather, and Charles (Phyllis); and is fondly remembered by his four grandchildren, Adam (Becky), David (Catherine), Graham and Julia.

A memorial service was conducted for Dr. Maclean by the Presbytery of Westminster within Richmond Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, August 7, 2001, with Barbara Marshall, moderator of presbytery, and The Rev. Dr. Tony Plomp, minister of the congregation, officiating.

ARNOLD, GRACE, a longtime faithful member and worker of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont., who would have celebrated her 100th birthday on October 31.

CARTER, HAROLD GEORGE, July 19, 2001. He was a staunch elder in the former Knox Church, Windsor, Ont.; a WWII veteran with the Elgin Regiment; a Shriner. Beloved husband of Joyce (Weldon), father of two daughters and their families.

CAUGHEY, ALLEN BRUCE, clerk of session 45 years, the patriarch of Amherst Island, Ont., died May 17, in his 92nd year. Funeral at St. Paul's May 21. Missed by all who knew him, especially his wife of 62 years, Helen (Marshall); his children, Allen (Bonnie), Beth (Jack) Forester, Bruce Jr. (Susan); his grandchildren, Julie and Jeff Forester, Amy and Jill Caughey, and Lori (Ben) Godden; and great-granddaughter, Abby Jo Godden, as well as many nieces, nephews.

CRUICKSHANK, GERALD W. "BUD," elder for 30 years at St. Andrew's, Wingham, Ont., Oct. 22, 2001.

GILCHRIST, AUDREY LOUISE, of Oshawa, Ont., passed away on June 7, 2001, in her 81st year. Beloved wife of The Rev. James Gilchrist. Dear mother of Nancy Habermehl and her husband, Stephen; David and his wife, Nancy; Mary Ann Rielly and her husband, Jim. Loving grandmother of Elizabeth, Kathleen and Evan Habermehl and Annalisa Rielly. Audrey served the church with Jim in Ontario and was an elder at St. Paul's, Oshawa. Her passion was missions, and she was a life member of the WMS. Her family and friends miss her ready smile, loving support and prayers.

LEITCH, ELIZABETH, member and elder, Calvin Church, Toronto, trustee for national church, investment counsellor for WMS, died Oct. 19.

REID, ELMER, February 1908-October 2001, lifelong member of St. Andrew's, Mansfield, Ont. He served as elder for 63 years with 50 years as clerk of session. He also was Sunday school superintendent and adult Bible class teacher. Humble servant of his Lord.

ROBERTSON, A. ALEXANDER "ALEX," a longtime elder, St. Andrew's, Wingham, Ont., Sept. 6, 2001.

WALL, GORDON H., longtime elder at St. Andrew's, Wingham, Ont., Oct. 28, 2001.

INDUCTIONS and RECOGNITIONS

Amiro, Rev. Larry, St. Andrew's, Beechwood; Knox, Centre Road; West Adelaide, Kerwood, Ont., Nov. 4, 2001.

Yee-Hibbs, Rev. Ann, area educational consultant, Synod of Southwestern Ontario, South Gate Church, Hamilton, Ont., May 29, 2001.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES and INTERIM MODERATORS

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Bass River, N.B., pastoral charge. Rev. Ralph MacKenzie, 106 Notre Dame, Atholville, N.B. E3N 3Z3.

Charlottetown, St. James (The Kirk). Rev. Harry Currie, 130 Victoria Rd., Summerside, P.E.I. C1N 2G5; 902-436-2557 (W); 902-888-3888 (H); kirkstjames@pei.sympatico.ca; www3.pei.sympatico.ca/kirkstjames.

Glace Bay, N.S., St. Paul's. Rev. Robert Lyle, 12 Lorway Ave., Sydney, N.S. B1P 4Z2; 902-564-4001; rdarjlyle@email.msn.com.

Hanwell (Fredericton), N.B., St. James. Rev. Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1M2; 506-455-8220; sapc@nbnet.nb.ca.

Montague, P.E.I., St. Andrew's; Cardigan, St. Andrew's. Rev. Roger MacPhee, Belfast Post Office, Belfast, P.E.I. C0A 1A0.

North Sydney, Cape Breton, N.S., St. Giles. Rev. Kenneth MacRae, 3 Queen St., Sydney Mines, N.S. B1V 1K4; 902-736-6394; kmacrae@ns.sympatico.ca.

Riverview, N.B., Bethel. Rev. Martin Kreplin, 90 Park St., Moncton, N.B. E1C 2B3.

Saint John, N.B., St. Columba. Rev. Ted Thompson, 101 Coburg St., Saint John, N.B. E2L 3B7; 506-634-7765.

Springhill, N.S., St. David's; Oxford, St. James; Riverview, St. Andrew's. Rev. Kevin Steeper, RR 2, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0; 902-485-8944; thesteepers@auracom.com.

St. John's, Nfld., St. David's (effective March 1, 2002). Rev. Ian S. Wishart, 98 Elizabeth Ave., St. John's, Nfld. A1A 1R8.

The Transitions column welcomes announcements of special events such as births, marriages, anniversaries, graduations, baptisms and the reception of new members, as well as death notices. The rate is $1 per word or $50 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.
All notices of pulpit vacancies, recognitions, ordinations and inductions will be charged to the congregation: $10 for the basic notice and $1 per word for additional information. (There will be no charge to congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.)
Contact the *Record* office regarding all items for the Transitions column.

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Fort-Coulonge, Que., St. Andrew's; Bristol, Bristol Memorial. Rev. Milton A. Fraser, 80 Daniel St. N, Arnprior, Ont. K7S 2K8; 613-623-5531; standrew@storm.ca.

Melbourne, Que., St. Andrew's. Rev. Ross Davidson, 702 rue Lafontaine, Thetford Mines, Que. G6G 3J6; jrhdavidson@globetrotter.net.

Montreal, Cote Des Neiges. Rev. Dr. Clyde Ervine, The Presbyterian College, 3495 University St., Montreal, Que. H3A 2A8.

Montreal, Maisonneuve-St. Cuthbert's (half-time). Rev. Coralie Jackson-Bissonnette, 5545 Snowdon Ave., Montreal, Que. H3X 1Y8.

Montreal, Robert Campbell Taiwanese (half-time, English/Taiwanese bilingual assistant). Rev. Harry Kuntz, 92 Rockwyn Ave., Pointe Claire, Que. H9R 1W2.

Morrisburg, Ont., Knox; Dunbar, Dunbar Church. Rev. Mark Bourgon, PO Box 220, Finch, Ont., K0C 1K0; 613-984-0772; mbourgon@glen-net.ca.

Sherbrooke-Lennoxville, Que., St. Andrew's (effective by April 30, 2002). Contact: Mrs. Marlene Cox, 470 Swede Rd., Compton, Que. J0B 1L0; 819-837-2086; triplejcox@sympatico.ca.

Stittsville (Ottawa), St. Andrew's. Rev. Tony Boonstra, 2 Church St., PO Box 498, Stittsville, Ont. K2S 1A6; boonstra@cyberus.ca.

Synod of Toronto and Kingston

Ajax, St. Andrew's. Rev. E.J. Briard, 255 Wright Cres., Ajax, Ont. L1S 5S5.

Ajax, St. Timothy's. Rev. Phillip Robillard, 447 Port Union Rd., Toronto, Ont. M1C 2L6; philrob@grace.on.ca; fax 416-284-8560.

Angus, Zion. Rev. Carol Smith, PO Box 354, Cookstown, Ont. L0L 1L0; bicpc@bconex.net.

Cambridge, Knox (Preston). Rev. Dr. Arnold Bethune, 49 White Pine Way, Guelph, Ont. N1G 4X7; bethune@accglobal.net.

Cambridge, St. Giles. Rev. Linda Ashfield, 50 Erb St. W, Waterloo, Ont. N2L 1T1; ashfield@nonline.net.

Campbellford, St. Andrew's; Burnbrae, St. Andrew's. Rev. George Turner, 120 Murray St., Peterborough, Ont. K9H 2S5.

Claude Church. Rev. Iain Nicol, Knox College, 59 St. George St., Toronto, Ont. M5S 2E6; 416-978-4509.

Colborne, Old St. Andrew's; Brighton, St. Andrew's. Rev. Doug Brown, 200 King St. W, Cobourg, Ont. K9A 2N1.

Elmvale, Elmvale Church; Flos, Knox. Rev. Deborah Dolbear-Van Bilsen, 208 Mosley St., Wasaga Beach, Ont. L0L 2P0; wbpres@georgian.net.

Etobicoke (Toronto), Albion Gardens (half-time minister). Rev. Brian Ross, 1579 Royal York Rd., Toronto, Ont. M9P 3C5.

Etobicoke, Mimico. Rev. Susanne Rescorl, 680 Annette St., Toronto, Ont. M6S 2C8; 416-767-2689; fax 416-767-1229.

Fenelon Falls, St. Andrew's; Glenarm, Knox. Rev. Doug Scott, RR 1, 22 Hillview Dr., Bobcaygeon, Ont. K0M 1A0.

Fergus, St. Andrew's. Rev. Linda Bell, 2 Cross St., Elmira, Ont. N3B 2S4; drbell@execulink.com.

Guelph, St. Andrew's (two ministers). Rev. Angus Sutherland, 75 Grand Ave. N, Cambridge, Ont. N1S 2L1; ajmacbagpipe@yahoo.com.

Maple, St. Andrew's. Rev. Bryn MacPhail, Box 164, 19 Stewart St., Beeton, Ont. L0G 1A0; 905-729-0055; bmacphal@netrover.com.

Markham, Chapel Place. Rev. George Beals, 10058 Yonge St., Richmond Hill, Ont. L4C 1T8. Potential candidates must have an intimate knowledge of Middle Eastern culture and be thoroughly fluent in Arabic and English.

Nobleton, St. Paul's. Rev. Sam Priestley, 143 Main St. N, Markham, Ont. L3P 1Y2.

Norval, Norval Church; Union Church. Rev. Mary Campbell, 22 James St., Georgetown, Ont. L7G 2H4; 905-877-8855; mcampbell@aztec-net.com.

Oakville, Hopedale. Rev. Glen Soderholm, PO Box 235, Campbellville, Ont. L0P 1B0.

Oakville, Trafalgar. Rev. Dennis Cook, 6945 Meadowvale TC Circle, Mississauga, Ont. L5N 2W7; 905-821-2753; revdjcook@hotmail.com.

Orillia, Orillia (St. Andrew's). Rev. Donald McKillican, 99 Peter St. N, Orillia, Ont. L3V 4Z3.

Orillia, St. Mark's. Rev. Carey Nieuwhof, RR 1, Comp. 126, Hawkestone, Ont. L0L 1T0; cnieuwhof@trinitycommunity.org; 705-487-1998.

Peterborough, St. Giles. Rev. J. Desmond Howard, 785 Park St. S, Peterborough, Ont. K9J 3T6; desmondhoward@sympatico.ca.

Puslinch, Duff's. Rev. Don McCallum, 795 Scottsdale Dr., Guelph, Ont. N1G 3R8.

Scarborough, Clairlea Park (part-time). Rev. Gerard Bylaard, 3817 Lawrence Ave. E, Toronto, Ont. M1G 1R2.

Scarborough, Westminster. Rev. Wallace Whyte, 20 Guildwood Pkwy. #1104, Toronto, Ont. M1E 5B6; w.g.whyte@sympatico.ca.

Schomberg, Emmanuel (half-time). Rev. Chris Carter, 13190 Keele St., King City, Ont. L7B 1J2; 905-833-2325; carter@istar.ca.

Toronto, Calvin. Rev. G. Cameron Brett, 75 Simcoe St., Toronto, Ont. M5J 1W9; cbrett@standrewstoronto.org.

Toronto, Rosedale. Rev. Charlotte Stuart, 129 Mount Pleasant Rd., Toronto, Ont. M4W 2S3; rpcmain@interlog.com.

Toronto, St. Giles Kingsway. Rev. Will Ingram, 4 Morningside Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6S 1C2; 416-766-4765.

Toronto, Toronto Korean (full-time associate minister in charge of English-speaking ministry). Rev. Cheol-soon Park, 67 Scarsdale Rd., North York, Ont. M3B 2R2; 416-447-5963.

Uptergrove, Knox; East Oro, Essen; Jarratt, Willis. Rev. Tim Purvis, Box 26, Stayner, Ont. L0M 1S0; seraph@sympatico.ca.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Ailsa Craig, Ailsa Craig Church (one-year interim ministry). Rev. Gloria Langlois, c/o Mrs. Adele McCallum, Box 107, Ailsa Craig, Ont. N0M 1A0; adele.mccallum@sympatico.ca.

Amherstburg, St. Andrew's. Rev. Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9E 1Z5; 519-972-3627.

Appin, Appin Church; Melbourne, Guthrie. Rev. Brian Nichol, RR 1, Dutton, Ont. N0L 1J0; 519-762-3724; revrev@webgate.net.

Ashfield, Ashfield Church; Ripley, Knox. Rev. Harvey Osborne, Box 399, Teeswater, Ont. N0G 2S0; 519-392-6955; osborne@scsinternet.com.

Beamsville, St. Andrew's; Smithville. Rev. Donna J. Riseborough, 202-2 Ferndale Ave., St. Catharines, Ont. L2P 3X8; driseborough@sympatico.ca.

Chatham, St. James. Rev. Ian McDonald, 60 Fifth St., Chatham, Ont. N7M 4V7; 519-352-2313; i.mcdonald@sympatico.ca.

Dresden, St. Andrew's; Rutherford, Rutherford Church. Rev. Evelyn Carpenter, 60 Fifth St., Chatham, Ont. N7M 4V7; 519-352-2313; ecarpenter@auracom.com.

Dunnville, Knox. Rev. James A. Goldsmith, 162 Bridlewood Dr., Welland, Ont. L3C 6L2; jngoldsmith@sympatico.ca.

London, Elmwood Avenue. Rev. Andrew Human, 55 Hincks St., St. Thomas, Ont. N5R 3N9; revhuman@execulink.com.

Milverton, Burns; North Mornington. Search Committee, 66 Main St. N, Milverton, Ont. N0K 1M0.

Monkton, Knox; Cranbrook, Knox. Rev. Peter Bush, Box 235, Mitchell, Ont. N0K 1N0; 519-348-9080; knoxmit@quadro.net.

Point Edward, Point Edward Church (part-time). Rev. James Sloan, 268 Dantiki Ct., Corunna, Ont. N0N 1G0.

Priceville, St. Andrew's (half-time). Rev. Scott Sinclair, 865 Second Ave. W, Owen Sound, Ont. N4K 4M6.

Stratford, Knox. Rev. Rick Horst, PO Box 247, St. Marys, Ont. N4X 1B1.

Thamesville, St. James; Duart. Rev. Jack Neil, Box 1148, Ridgetown, Ont. N0P 2C0; 519-674-3487.

Wallaceburg, Knox (June 1, 2002). The Search Committee, Knox Presbyterian Church, 251 Duncan St., Wallaceburg, Ont. N8A 5G5; Office 519-627-4367 or 519-627-0842; Fax 519-627-9480; knox@kent.net.

Windsor, Chinese (Cantonese-speaking, part-time). Rev. Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9E 1Z5.

Windsor, St. Andrew's (second full-time ordained staff position). Rev. Jeff Loach, 405 Victoria Ave., Windsor, Ont. N9A 4N1; loach@jet2.net.

Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Carberry, Man., Knox-Zion. Rev. Gladys Anderson, Box 553, Neepawa, Man. R0J 1H0; fax 204-476-5387; gmander@escape.ca.

Flin Flon, Man., St. Andrew's (full-time ordained minister with interest in developing a centre for rural and remote ministries). Rev. Dale Woods, 339-12th St., Brandon, Man. R7A 4M3; phone 204-727-5874; fax 204-728-7037; fpc@escape.ca.

Fort Frances, Ont., St. Andrew's. Rev. Bert Vancook, 207 South Brodie St., Thunder Bay, Ont. P7E 1C1; presby1@baynet.net.

Kenora, Ont., First. Rev. Beth M. McCutcheon, 1476 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Man. R3G 0W3.

Selkirk, Man., Knox. Rev. Ken Innes, 23 Parkview Pl., St. Andrews, Man. R1A 3B7; 204-334-6177.

Winnipeg, First. Rev. Brenda Fraser, 2373 Main St., Winnipeg, Man. R2V 4T6; 204-339-3502; kpresbyc@pangea.ca.

Winnipeg, St. Andrew's-Calvin (joint charge seeking full-time minister). Rev. John Hogerwaard, 341 Eveline St. at McLean Ave., Selkirk, Man. R1A 1M9; 204-482-6425.

Synod of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, Circle West-Parkview. Rev. S. R. Kim, 2119 Louise Ave., Saskatoon, Sask. S7J 3K2.

Yorkton, Knox; Dunleath. Rev. Catherine Dorcas, Box 665, Whitewood, Sask. S0G 5C0; 306-735-4203.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Dawson Creek, B.C., St. James. Rev. Willem van de Wall, 9704 99th Avenue, Fort St. John, B.C. V1J 1T8; 250-785-2450; willem@ocol.com.

Medicine Hat, St. John's. Rev. Dr. Roy Gellatly, 1306 13th Ave. S, Lethbridge, Alta. T1K 0R5; gellat-r@agt.net.

North Peace Territorial Ministry. Rev. Shirley Cochrane, PO Box 37, Wanham, Alta. T0H 3P0; 780-694-2185; scochran@telusplanet.net.

Synod of British Columbia

Castlegar, Grace. Rev. Gavin Robertson, 1112 Shutek Dr., Trail, B.C. V1R 4R2; tworevs@telus.net.

Nanaimo, St. Andrew's. Rev. Robert Kerr, 921 Wembley Rd., Parksville, B.C. V9P 2E6; rajpkerr@home.com.

New Westminster, Knox. Rev. Dr. J.H. (Hans) Kouwenberg, 2597 Bourquin Cres. E, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1Y6; calvinpresb@telus.net.

Vancouver, Central. Rev. Bruce McAndless-Davis, 1320 7th Ave., New Westminster, B.C. V3M 2K1; 604-526-4914; fax 604-543-7597; bruce@staidans.bc.ca.

Vancouver, Chinese (associate minister for English-language service). Rev. Robert Allison, 1179 Cloverley St., North Vancouver, B.C. V7L 1N7; fax 604-988-4773.

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Answers to Presbyterian quiz

from page 30

1. (b) 1875
2. (c) The Westminster Confession
3. (b) Jesus Christ
4. (d) All of the above
5. (d) All of the above

called to wonder

Written by Erin Walton,
youth minister, First Church, Edmonton

Have you ever wondered why we celebrate Christmas and what the true meaning of Christmas is? We are celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ — his birthday!

What do birthdays and Christmas mean to you? Gifts? In a way, Christmas is about gifts. It is about the greatest gift of all: Jesus Christ. God loved us so much God sent his Son, a little baby in a manger, to be our Saviour.

This year, let's focus on giving instead of receiving. Homemade gifts are special because they are made with love and care. Try making this homemade craft. Give it to a teacher, a coach, a minister — anyone! It is better to give than to receive!

A Christmas wish for you!

Every time you see F, R, X or Z in the grid below, colour it green. Colour all the other letters red. When you are finished, the red letters spell a Christmas wish for you!

F	R	X	Z	X	Z	R	F	R	X	Z	R	F
X	Z	R	X	M	A	Y	R	X	R	Z	F	X
Z	G	O	D	Z	F	B	L	E	S	S	X	Z
R	F	R	X	Y	O	U	X	R	Z	F	Z	R
Z	X	W	I	T	H	X	J	O	Y	Z	F	Z
F	Z	A	N	D	X	P	E	A	C	E	Z	X
R	X	Z	T	O	D	A	Y	F	R	X	Z	F
X	A	N	D	X	A	L	W	A	Y	S	X	F
F	R	Z	X	Z	F	X	R	X	F	Z	F	Z
R	X	F	Z	R	X	Z	F	Z	R	X	Z	F

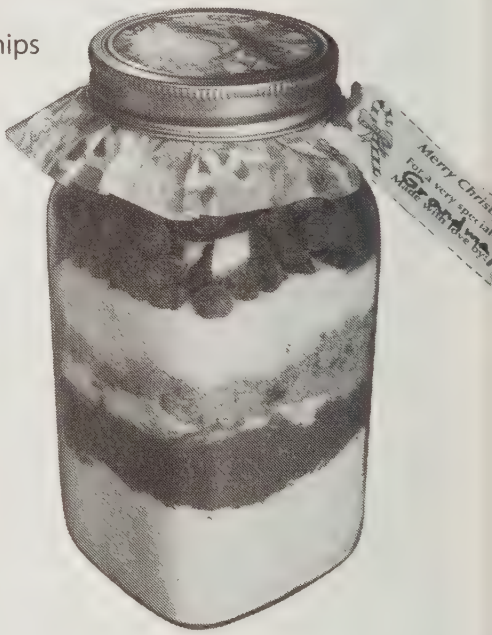
Link to more learning activities about **Christmas** online at: www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html

Sand Art Brownies

Ask an adult to help you with this craft.

Layer the following ingredients in a one-quart mason jar in the order given. Do not mix ingredients.

- ✓ 1/2 tsp salt
- ✓ 1/2 cup + 2 Tbsp flour
- ✓ 1/2 cup cocoa
- ✓ 1/2 cup flour + 1/2 tsp baking powder
- ✓ 2/3 cup packed brown sugar
- ✓ 2/3 cup white sugar
- ✓ 1/2 cup chocolate chips
- ✓ 1/2 cup white chips
- ✓ Fill rest of jar with chopped nuts.



Cover jar with round piece of Christmas cloth and an elastic. Colour and cut out the gift tag below. Fold the tag in half, so the instructions are on the back, and tie it to the jar with a red or green ribbon.

Combine contents of jar with:

1 tsp vanilla
2/3 cup oil
3 eggs

Mix well. Pour into greased and floured 9" x 9" pan. Bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees.



Merry Christmas!

For a very special person:

Made with love by:

Robert Thompson

"Unto us a child is born"

See what love God has given us that we should be called children of God …

"For unto us a child is born," a chorus from the *Messiah* by George Frideric Handel, is one song that always sticks in my belly in a powerful and intimate way. Handel must have been there that night, as he was in my head and in my heart.

I was dressed in a hospital gown, standing in front of the nurses station. Suddenly, voices were raised and lights began to flash. I heard some type of alarm bell ringing and saw people running. There were problems in the operating or delivery room, and part of me was in there — my wife, Bev.

I stood in terror. The usually calm, cool and collected person wilted inside. I was struck with fear and anxiety and lack of control. I could now understand and identify with the disciples whom a New Testament storyteller described as "terror struck."

Suddenly, a middle-aged nurse appeared. "Did you used to be a chaplain at the Toronto Western Hospital?" she asked. No, I hadn't, but I could see from the look on her face that details weren't important. "We have a woman who has just given birth to a pound-and-a-half baby," she said. "She is Portuguese and of the Roman Catholic tradition. The child will not live long, and she would like a priest to baptize the baby for her."

Let me tell you, most of my buttons were being pushed — theological, psychological and cultural. My inner child was feeling weak and overwhelmed; yet, somehow, I was able to process all that was going on and spoke in a hushed voice, "Could you get me some water?"

I was ushered into another room with a mother and a tiny infant. Water arrived.



Water, that most archetypal symbol of life. I spoke with the mother for several minutes as the child lay quietly on her tummy. Then, I evoked those ancient words "In the name of God the Father … " and, also, the powerful phrase from my own baptism: "See what love God has given us that we should be called children of God — and so we are."

I remembered the words of poet John Donne: "God wrapped me in his covenant and derived me of Christian parents. It was Christ's blood I drank in the womb and Christ's milk that I suckled at my mother's breast. The first words that I heard were the words of Christians. The first image I knew was the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Those words became written in my heart in a new way that night.

I was then ushered, or maybe carried, to the nurses station. It was wonderful that, in my time of crisis, I could collapse into the arms of my friends and the senior chaplain at the Toronto Western Hospital. Some months later, I remembered all this while reviewing a book on pastoral care in which the author suggested "… ninety per cent of pastoral care is just being there."

Also in the hospital that night, Bev was carrying twins. When one died, despite the help of modern medicine, a mother was in torment. Our fears were immense. But as Handel spoke those biblical words, "For unto us a child is born," our beautiful 7 pound 6 ounce son was born. "A child is born" filled my green-robed ears.

In times of deep reflection, I often wonder whose child I baptized that night? A Portuguese infant, they said. Yet, did I in reality baptize my own twin? There was mystery, life, pain, death, sin and resurrection that night.

Thank God for Handel, for all musicians and poets, for mothers and fathers who have lost children. And for nurses and doctors who lose sleep that we may live and die.

Unto us, too, a child was born. "Andrew, I baptize you in the name … "

On profession of his faith, 15-year-old Andrew was confirmed this year by his mother, Rev. Beverly Thompson, minister of Old Windham United Church in Simcoe, Ont. R

Robert Thompson, a minister of The United Church of Canada, lives in Simcoe, Ont., and is currently supplying at Chalmers United Church, Woodstock Ont.



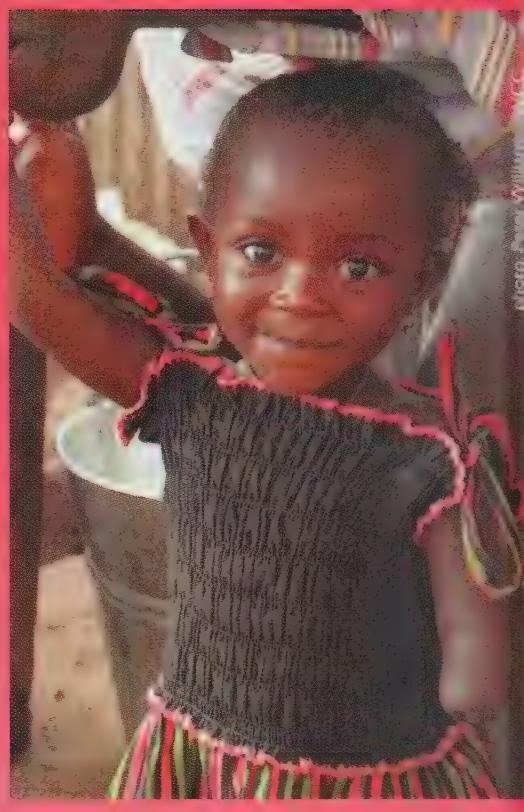
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